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Evelyn J. Shirley,
Eatington Park, Warwickshire.

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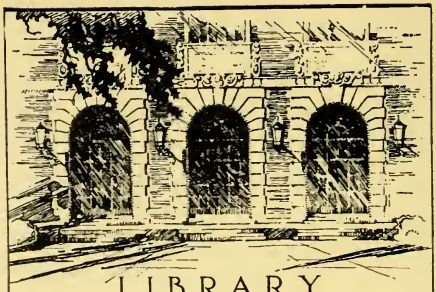

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E J Shirley

WALTER EVELYN;

OR,

THE LONG MINORITY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1853.

WESTMINSTER:
PRINTED BY J. B. NICHOLS AND SONS,
25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

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WALTER EVELYN.

CHAPTER I.

"I saw a troop
Of lords and ladies gay
As I lay a thynkyne, a thynkyne, a thynkyne,—
As I lay a thynkyne they went upon their way."

How do you do, my Public? We have not met for some time. Fatter, eh, my Public? Looking well, too. Manchester pretty quiet? So, that's right! Farmers not so well, eh? Dissatisfied because they have not got Lord Derby now? I do not see that it is any business of yours, my Public, how I came by this manuscript, but I will tell you, too, if you like. I went out to California, made my fortune in three days of course, three million

sterling, robbed of it all in Panama, that is, paid it all to a doctor, who cured me of the yellow fever, caught in the mines; worked my passage home. My wife did not know me, said she did not like yellow people; went away in despair to Homburg, to get back my complexion and regain my wife, who had serious thoughts of marrying again.—(Mem. Curate very assiduous in his attendance.) Shown into a room at the hotel, just vacated by a remarkably fresh-coloured gentleman, thought it was a good omen, determined to take up my quarters there; looked in the pigeon-holes of the incomprehensible table you always find in a German hotel and break your nose against, under the impression that it is a washhand-stand. Well, there it lay in a pigeon-hole on the right side, I mean the manuscript, evidently left there by fresh-coloured gentleman. Pigeon-hole would not open at first—I pulled at it, it resisted; I pulled harder, got excited, handle gave way, fell down, knocked my head against another piece of incomprehensible furniture with marble top standing against the bed. Incomprehensible piece of furniture rattled as if there was something inside. Never mind

now, look into it by-and-bye, perhaps a treasure also left by fresh-coloured gentleman. Well, up again, would not be discouraged (bump on my head not very large after all), attacked pigeon-hole again with German pocket-knife, German pocket-knife broke, cut my fingers—hot work—bound up my finger,—never say die; tried English corkscrew screwed up to the hilt into the place where the handle was; German wood-work gave way; another bump on the head, but victory! victory! first incomprehensible piece of furniture tumbled all down together; hurt my knee a little in falling; never mind, get at drawer now from behind. Put my foot against it to push it out from the other side, back gave way, would *not* open to the last, any more than a Spanish window will. At last, then, cried I, here we are! Pooh, only a bundle of old bills! Eh? No! What's this! Walter Evelyn! A literary discovery—a second Rowley! No, it's not of the fifteenth century either. Never mind, I shall be a second Chatterton in all except Mrs. Angel and the arsenic water. Hollo! though, I forgot all about fresh-coloured gentleman. Run after him, quite breathless; caught him

just getting into his carriage in the inn-yard; caught hold of him. Sir! Sir! Rowley! Chatterton! Walter Evelyn left behind. Here fresh-coloured gentleman sung out wildly; evidently thought I was mad. Valet came running up (an Englishman named Thomas, I hear); felt a sudden jerk; something disturbed the skirts of my coat; lifted at least two inches off the ground; recovered myself in time to see fresh-coloured gentleman driving away, English Tom, grinning in the rumble, and mumbling something about having "done for that 'ere Dutchman." Well, I am free to confess I do look something like a foreigner, *distingué* as it were, but not like a Dutchman. And now, my Public, I hope you are satisfied that I did everything an honest man could do to restore the manuscript to its rightful owner. I may add, all that unusual energy under great difficulties could accomplish I did; notwithstanding the application of what it has been hinted to me was the foot (?) of English Tom. And if during the publication of these pages the fresh-coloured gentleman should turn up and claim his own, I shall first demand compensation for the indignity put

upon me, and then deliver up the manuscript, that is, for a con-si-de-ra-ti-on, as Mr. Trapbois used very wisely to say.

Eh? what, my Public? you don't believe a word of it? Why, what can be more likely. Pooh? You may say "pooh" if you like, but I have got the manuscript, and here it is; and if you consider the fresh-coloured gentleman an imaginary personage, all I can say is that the first night I slept in the room he had previously occupied I got up with such a red face that I thought I had caught the scarlet fever. Little Tom Quidnunc, the doctor from Brighton, who was staying in the house, would have it that the redness (which I am bound to confess went off afterwards) was brought on by sleeping too soundly between two feather beds after a supper of black puddings; but I am convinced, and am no more likely to alter my opinion than a Protectionist in office, that the extraordinary red colour which I saw while shaving in the looking-glass that morning was occasioned by sleeping in the same bed which had been occupied by the fresh-coloured gentleman.—Mem. They never change the counterpanes in Germany! A convincing fact!

What, still incredulous? Well, *verbum personale*, or, as I once heard those words translated by a hedge schoolmaster in Ireland—

> "A man convinced against his will
> Is of the same opinion still."

At all events, I've got the MS. and mean to make my publisher's fortune with it; in fact, I have been thinking of giving the copyright to his eldest son, if he asks me to stand godfather, as I have no doubt he will be dazzled at my literary reputation as Editor of these papers. Meantime, if he likes to do my banking business, why I can draw upon him, and of course he can deduct the money paid to my order from the sale of my next poem. *Verbum sat.*

CHAPTER II.

SMALL BEGINNINGS.

My father was the younger son of a poor Marquis, who flourished during the gay times of the regency of his late sacred Majesty King George the Fourth, who deserves for ever to be embalmed in the memory of the entire tailor population of these kingdoms. My grandfather, the Marquis of Arramore, had an estate which was wholly swallowed up by encumbrances, and which cost him about three thousand a-year to keep up. It was the very bugbear of his life, this estate. It got him into law-suits, election squabbles, county subscriptions, and botherations without end; and I

fancy he had never gone to bed nor got up again since the time of the last mortgage (which was, by the way, all swallowed up in costs) without cursing it, with the whole staff of bailiffs, agents, gardeners, stewards, and harpies belonging to it. He quarrelled with Staunton, his eldest son, about it, because he would not cut off the entail, and bring it to the hammer. Lord Staunton was, however, in Parliament, Under-Secretary for some department or other, and a rising man. The place cost *him* nothing, and he knew very well the importance it gives a man in public life to be the reputed heir to a fine estate. Lord Staunton was asked out to dinner every day in the year as the future heir of Evelyn Abbey. Ministers had a proper respect for their young colleague, and for his interest in the county; and everybody looked upon Lord Staunton as a young nobleman of high abilities and great expectations, who had a right to look forward to the grand prizes of a public life. It would never have done for him to sell Evelyn Abbey, —the world's opinion of him would have dwindled to nothing at once. He would have been, "Poor fellow! Quite ruined, I hear. Creditors

allow him two hundred pounds a-year to look after the property." "Lord —— with a broken fortune:" and so forth. So Lord Staunton was determined his father should still have the pleasure of keeping up the place in Lincolnshire and the county interest. Moreover, he had some reason to complain; for Lord Arramore, who had never thought all his life about any one but himself, had upon his wife's death invested the whole of her property, which she, with woman's trust, had bequeathed to him, in the purchase of an annuity during his own life. Staunton was very angry: he said it ought to have gone to pay off the encumbrances and portion his brothers. But the Marquis only put on an extra air of dignity; wondered what a man's children would want him to do next; hired a French cook and a house in Stanhope Street; gave the best dinners in London; and tried at least to *let* that dreary old Penitentiary, as he used to call it, down in Lincolnshire, which had been the plague of his life.

Staunton made it up with his father after some time: he found him useful. The old gentleman did not care two straws about his

vote; and when Staunton plied him one day with a long harangue after dinner, the object of which was to persuade him to leave his proxy in the hands of Government (there had been a split in the Cabinet, and the party had gone out to which it was supposed the Marquis of Arramore especially belonged), the Marquis assented with the most charming air of indifference in the world. Then he had a good deal of influence in a certain kind of society, and in those days it was just that kind which was uppermost. The Regent was always delighted to see the witty old gentleman at Brighton and Windsor, whose fat stories and salt jokes were the laughter of every dinner-table in London.

Staunton found that by dining with his father he could learn what was really going on at court better than anybody; and sometimes it was useful to know what others did not. Then the Marquis would always ask anybody who was really a pleasant fellow, and did not bore him, so that Staunton gave up his own cook; he intended, indeed, at one time to give up his chambers at the Albany too, and live in Stanhope Street altogether. But the very hint of such a thing so discomposed his father, that he

went off to Paris for six weeks, and when he came back, Staunton did not think it expedient to renew the proposal.

So the Marquis glided into his own style of life, belonged to all the clubs that were worth belonging to, and his cheery face, and quiet chocolate-coloured demi fortune, were as well known to the link-boys at the theatres and the opera (for people went to the theatres in those days) as could be. He led one of those pleasant, busy, do-nothing sort of lives which we sometimes find elderly gentlemen enjoying, very much to their own satisfaction, and apparently to that of other people. Some people grumbled a little, a poor relation or two were dissatisfied; one who was curate of Little Twaddlington, which living was in the gift of the Marquis, preached a sermon against him, when it was announced that the advowson had been sold; and he learned in the newspapers that he had been burnt in effigy. This did not please the peer at all; he hated publicity of all kinds, and had the most forgiving temper of any man alive. So he asked the curate to dinner to meet the Bishop of Blazes, presented him to my lord, and took occasion to remark incidentally on his

close relationship. The Bishop liked good dinners, the poor relation was an excellent toady, and putting this and that together, the Bishop promoted the troublesome fellow to be his own chaplain, and the Marquis got praised up to the skies for his magnanimity, and, what was better, got quit of some proceedings which had been taken against him in one of the ecclesiastical courts, and which had hitherto prevented his touching the produce of the sale of the advowson. My father, Lord Herbert Evelyn, and two other brothers (one of whom fortunately for me went out shortly after to India), lived with their father on excellent terms. They might dine with him, one at a time, whenever they liked, and provided they did not ask for anything ; and they had each five thousand pounds, which had been left them by Lady Tabitha Evelyn, who died while they were children. This five thousand pounds had, indeed, accumulated so considerably by the time they were of age that the Marquis wished them to lend him the principal, secured on the estate, and promising to pay them four per cent., that he might add to his annuity, which paid him ten ; and that thus he might be a gainer

of six per cent. The only son who fell into this little trap was Lord Walter, and he soon had reason to repent it. The Marquis wanted him to live down at Evelyn Court, and manage the estates, instead of receiving his interest. "There is the hay-crop, and the grapes, you know; and all that wall-fruit (after my table has been supplied, of course), which will pay you much more than you wish me; and I tell you, my dear boy, I've not got it,—I really have not got it—upon my soul I have not—that is to say, not without inconvenience," said the Marquis. So Lord Walter, who was very quiet and reserved, smiled sadly when his father had finished, and never asked him any more. My uncle Howard, who can never to this day speak of Lord Walter without a moist eye, says he was the finest fellow that ever put on a boot. Slight and dark, very pale, and rather sad looking,—but "with the sweetest smile ever seen," adds my aunt Lady Mary, stifling a sigh. "Well, this was all Walter got by lending his money on the estates," my uncle would say; "and he soon sold his horses, and paid his debts; which was more than any of you besides ever did (except Staunton), and got Staunton to have

him appointed secretary to some one who was going out to India. We heard great accounts of Walter after that." So my uncle tells the story. "He changed from the civil service into the army, and every gazette mentioned him honourably. I was in the Guards, and he did not forget me. The first time I heard from him was that he had lodged money at the agent's for my captaincy; he tried to do it on the sly —dear Walter!—and lodged it in my father's name, for I had had a quarrel with him before he went away. And to your father, who was the youngest of his brothers, he sent five hundred pounds, promising to continue it every year, if he liked to go into the church or the army. Herbert, however, would not do either, but got married." And Lord Walter? I asked, I remember, when my uncle first told this story: "Poor Walter," my uncle would say, "He died of the climate just as he was returning home loaded with honour and prize-money." "And then Helen Lascelles died broken-hearted, too," said aunt Mary, quietly; "and we heard they had been engaged all along."

But this story of Uncle Walter is only an episode, and ought not to have been introduced

here at all, save that he left his fortune to my father Lord Herbert Evelyn's eldest son, and that is why I got the name of Walter. Let us now however return to my father. He was almost the last of a race of dandies now rapidly becoming extinct. The little fortune he had, and the annuity sent to him by Lord Walter, was soon squandered in driving curricles, and unicorns, and tandems, and wearing the skins of unborn foals, at thirty guineas each, upon his coat-collars, and committing all the graceless, hard-drinking, inelegant debaucheries of the time. He had wit too in his way, wit which, if cultivated and properly restrained, would have made him a brilliant and a useful man; as it was, he became nothing but a man of fashion, and lived altogether with the wild young bloods of the day. Lord Staunton tried very hard to reform him, and got him, for one Session, into Parliament; but my father only astonished everybody by a brilliant; showy speech or two, and then could never afterwards be got away from the gaming-table; at last he married. Staunton heard that Lord Yarmouth was to give away the bride, and would not go to the wedding. He tried indeed to stop the

match, but my father would not listen to him. Staunton never spoke to him afterwards, and the Marquis did not ask him to dinner. My mother had about thirty thousand pounds however, which was believed to be much more, and my father cared no more for his relations than he did for anything else. They all cut him—all except Lord Walter, who wrote them a letter which my mother treasured up in her jewel-case, and I once saw her read it through her tears. They always kept up a correspondence afterwards. And my mother got introduced to Helen Lascelles, who was a cousin of my father's, and Helen used to come to us, and was, I believe, the only woman my mother ever sincerely liked. My mother and she were inseparable; Lord Walter said he wished it; and my mother long afterwards used to say that this was the sweetest time of her life. When Lord Walter died she tended Helen night and day the little time she lived after him, for her health had been long broken by those cruel years of absence. Her last sigh was breathed in my mother's arms, and a little before her death she gave her a portrait of Lord Walter which she had always worn round her neck, and said

feebly, "I meant to have it buried with me, dear Lucy; but take it. It is the only thing I value in the world." This portrait my mother always after wore next her heart; and, when I was a very little boy, I once remember hearing her pray to it. She used to say, "There never was but one good man in the world, and that was Walter Evelyn, who could not live in it." Praying, indeed, was not generally much a part of my mother's character; nor, indeed, did she do anything else except dress her hair, which was very beautiful, and read novels, and go to the theatre, which she did very constantly, and with never-ending enjoyment. My mother never would believe that I could remember certain things, which I do remember perfectly well, nevertheless. I remember them as well as if they had passed yesterday. I remember my father's house in town—a large house in Clarges-street, full of buhl, and marble, and indifferent pictures, which had been sold to him as originals of value. I remember the very ceiling, painted sky-blue, with birds, of which one was a bird of paradise flying about in the middle. I remember the cupboards in my mother's bed-room, where I used to hide

when I was frightened of being whipped by the nurse for crying at being left alone. I remember even the nurse's gin-bottle in one corner of it,—she kept it under the clothes. My mother used to say languidly to her, when she brought me down to her, "There, there, nurse, let Master Walter come to me, and put him down, please, and stand at the door; you smell like the places where we change horses on our way to the Hall. Does not she, Taylor?" my mother would add to her maid; and Taylor would say, "La! bless me, my lady, you know them nusses always does." All this my mother would never believe I could remember, and would open her large blue surprised eyes, and say, "Nonsense! Walter, you were a baby then." I remember, when I was a little older, —I might have been six years old then,—getting permission to sit up on my birthday till mamma came home from the theatre. I was very sleepy, but it was a point of honour not to give in, so I sat bolt upright upon my little chair, with my eyes aching, and every now and then closing themselves of their own accord; but I would not go to bed, and constantly assured the housemaid (a kind of Peggotty), and

the butler, and the cook, who were all sitting up (for my mother always took supper), that I was wide awake, whereat they all laughed, and the housemaid said, "Bless you! so you are;" and on one occasion gave me such a hugging, that my ears tingled for I don't know how long afterwards; upon which demonstration of the tenderness of her disposition I remember the butler sang something about—

"Oh! what appy days we'll see,
With our childring on our knee;"

and the cook laughed, and the housemaid grew red, but seemed to like it too; and I could not think for the life of me what it all meant. At length came a rumbling of wheels, and a knock at the door, that made the very plates, ranged in rows on the shelves (for we were in the kitchen), to rattle again. "There's my lady," they all cried out. "Oh, there's mama! oh, do let me go! Oh, please let me go to meet her when she comes in," cried I. "Don't 'ee, don't 'ee, Master Walter," said the butler, who was a good-natured fellow, "I should think my lady 'll be angry with Jeames if I lets you go to the door." "Oh no, James!" said I, struggling up into his arms, while he was just

giving a touch of powder to his hair. "Oh no, James! I will beg you off, I will indeed!"

Rat! tat! tat! tara! tara! Rat! tat! tat! tat! tat! went the knocker again, as if the house was to be knocked down; and we heard a voice outside saying, "The lazy rascals! I'll horsewhip every one of them. E—very one of them—I'll be hanged if I don't." "Oh, its papa! its papa!" said I, climbing up stairs, "I will see him; dear, dear papa!"

"Here's my lord back from Newmarket! Look alive!" said James, rushing up stairs, quite forgetting me, who followed close at his heels.

Wide swung the door upon its hinges—a post-chaise, with four reeking posters, stood before it. My father, the handsomest of men, the very picture of a gallant dare-devil reckless blood of the day, got out. He was covered with mud from head to heel, and had evidently posted up in the same dress he had worn on the course. It was a dress of which we saw the last on Sir Francis Burdett, the late Lord Westmorland, and the Duke of Dorset. Blue coat, leather breeches, top boots, and a high white cravat, and under-waistcoat.

As my father got out of the chaise, child as

I was, I saw that there was something unusual about him, and that he looked strangely flushed and disordered. He came unsteadily up the steps; drew himself up to his full height. "I will," said he, striking his heavy riding-whip on his boot, and looking the very soul of sly wit and good humour, as he always did, "I will flog e—ve—ry scoundrel in the ha—a—use," and the next moment he measured his full length upon the hall floor. It was of stone, and it stunned him.

There was a tremendous bustle and running about for hot vinegar and such simple remedies as could be applied till the doctor came; and I don't know how it became clear to my mind that my father had fallen down simply because he was tipsy. I clung to him wildly, and would not be torn away, and cried till my face was quite blistered, for I loved him dearly, that reckless, selfish, good-natured saunterer through life that I now know he was. He slowly recovered himself, and was seated in the great chair in the dining-room hiccoughing out jokes to me, and making me laugh through my tears as he tossed me about on his knee. I do not even now know how

it was that everybody loved my father, and that he exercised a species of fascination over all with whom he came in contact; but so it was, and so it remained long afterwards, when he was changed indeed.

It must have surprised my mother a good deal when she came home, as she did shortly afterwards, to find the scene that presented itself to her in the dining-room. Instead of the roast plovers she had ordered for supper, there sat my father with his dress all in disarray, and bedabbled with blood; beside him stood Mary the housemaid, wetting a large patch of brown paper on his forehead with vinegar, and cook holding the basin which supplied it. There sat my father, flushed and bright-eyed, and hiccoughing out jokes, first to me and then to the servants, and none of us able for the lives and souls of us to help laughing till the room rang again. On the table lay a handful of sovereigns and bank-notes, and a pocket-book apparently pretty well stuffed, which had fallen from my father's pocket. I do not know what my mother thought of us altogether, or of my father and the servants, and the blood, and the vinegar

and brown paper, and the laughter separately. She was not a sort of person to shew herself astonished at anything: "Leave the room," said she to the servants, "Go away;" and then she went up and kissed him silently, for she saw how it was, and said, "Oh, Herbert!" There was something very touching in the manner in which my mother said "Oh, Herbert!" It said so much and seemed to say so little. "Lucy Bird," said my father, "don't be angry with me."

"I am *not* angry," she answered, "Oh, no."

"I know you *are* now, Lucy Bird."

"Indeed I am not, you dear, dear naughty boy;—but who is that they tell me is waiting up in the drawing-room, dear Herbert?"

"Lucy Bird," said my father again and this time his handsome mouth twitched painfully, and he was quite sober. "Lucy Bird, give me a glass of curaçoa."

"Not to-night—not before supper."

"Why not, Lucy Bird? the sooner I die the sooner you will be a blooming widow; and—and—Harkaway has lost the cup—and I'm arrested for seven thousand pounds. The man upstairs is a bailiff, and we shall not sup to-

gether to-night, Lucy." My mother turned ghastly pale, and then fell upon his neck (that cold, languid woman), and cried, as if her heart was breaking. "Oh, my husband! my dear, dear husband!" I nestled between them, and took my father's hand, which was as cold as ice.

CHAPTER III.

My mother's efforts were all in vain; she had sold and sacrificed, till she could sell and sacrifice no longer. Her plate and jewels were long gone; and he had sold many a year ago his reversionary life-interest in her property. The fortune Lord Walter had left to me was not to be got at; though my father promised liberally enough in my name that I should ratify any security given on it when I came of age. There was no getting at the precise amount of my father's debts, either. He absolutely and entirely forgot every creditor who

was not hotly pressing him for money; and would pledge his honour he did not owe them a farthing. Unfortunately, he had been through life so extremely ready to pledge his honour, that it was not worth redeeming any longer.

So Lord Herbert Evelyn went to prison, to the King's Bench,—and a very gentlemanly place it was in those days. He had a handsome apartment in that division of the building which used to be called the State House: an obstinate Baronet, of large fortune, who could pay his creditors and would not, lived in great style in the next chamber, keeping two powdered footmen, and receiving visits from his astonished tenantry all day long,—for it was in the golden days of the old law. Subsequently this old gentleman got lodgings in the Rules, and lived in great glory, defying his creditors for many years, till better legislation forced him into honesty,—and then he died. There were also two or three heirs to peerages living in the State House, which was the Belgravia of the place; and innumerable ex-Captains of the Guards and fashionable men about town, under a cloud,—yes, that was the cant term,—kept up a perpetual exchange of civi-

lities, and a round of conviviality from twelve o'clock one day, which was about the time they got up, till the small hour of the next, when they went to bed again.

I blush to record that my father was a great deal too much in his element in this sort of society; and he soon became the very life and soul of it. Where he got money, or where he got credit, it was impossible to say, and, three days afterwards, he could not have told you himself; but he *did* get both, and used to give dinners at three guineas a-head to a knot of choice fellows like himself, and lose a "cool" (why "*cool?*") hundred or two afterwards at chicken-hazard (the great game in those days) with the best grace in the world.

It was a touching thing to see the wives, and mothers, and sisters of these "gay dogs" come in to see them. Elegant and lovely women, upon whose cheeks the very winds of heaven had been never before suffered to blow too rudely,—who had ridden in coronetted carriages, till they had almost forgotten how to walk, used to come tripping down on their errand of love, through rain and rough weather, and often many a good mile on foot, to bring

but one extra guinea to those thankless prodigals, or save ever so little from the wreck at home. I knew one dear lady, one of the best and brightest who ever gladdened the home of a worthless husband,—she afterwards wore the coronet of an Irish marchioness; but then she used to bring the Honourable Phelim (her husband) little veal patties of her own making, thinking (bless her innocence!) that he had no dinner. Running into their room too one day, I saw her stealthily mending his stockings. I know she kept no servant, and she lived in a quiet obscure street in Lambeth, full of journeyman cabinet-makers and musicians, where she had a little lodging at seven or eight shillings a week: while the Honourable Phelim had never had so much money in his life as he was then making (to lose it again) by a run of luck at the accursed table.

My mother and I, and a maid-servant, lived in Melina Place, after the breaking up of the great house in Clarges Street. It was a row of lodging-houses in the Rules, and full as a rabbit-warren of the relatives of prisoners. She visited my father every day, and I was sent on such frequent errands to and fro that

my feet learned the way by instinct, and often when very tired I used to enjoy a quiet nap on the road; when I awoke I was always sure to find myself before the doors. I got into terrible habits too, for I had nobody to control me, my mother reading novels and writing letters alternately, and my father being occupied far otherwise than in attending to me. I made many street acquaintance, and went out to places to take tea, from whence it is a wonder that I ever came safe back again to our mockery of a home. We never had any regular meals after my mother's breakfast of a morning, which she took in bed, and I grew to have a fondness for cookshop plum-pudding at a penny a slice, and knew where it was to be found richest, and with the most plums in it. I soon got over the shame of asking for it, and ate it in the street with a gipsy relish. What an abandoned ruined little child I must have looked, so small, so young, with the unmistakeable dress and air of a little gentleman, wandering about the streets alone. It is perhaps lucky for me to this day that I was upon the whole an unsocial boy; and, though I had a sort of patronising acquaintance with a one-

eyed pieman, who carried on his commerce in Fleet Market, I knew very few of his customers except by sight.

Once I was carried off, by the abandoned son of an old prisoner, who had been a colonel in the army, and left in pawn at his lodgings while he got his things away. It was late at night when I was carried home, and my mother borrowed the money of her landlady to ransom me, yet I had never been missed.

How well I remember all this, and being sent afterwards to the room of the haggard old colonel, terrible in his misery, to get back this money half-a-guinea at a time.

I used to dream of that grey-haired old man, with his grand unhappy face, and fancied he was like a picture of Ugolino starving in his prison, which my father took once as part of the discount of a bill, and which had been explained to me, and had fascinated my childish imagination amazingly.

I remember also another event which happened at this time, though I am hardly able to say why, except for the running about it cost me; for my dear mother, much as she loved me, used me very much like an errand-boy,

perhaps without thinking at all about it, and for my part I would sooner have done any thing than go to school. My mother wished very much to buy the Rules, as a surprise to my father on his birthday, and I am sadly afraid that many of the letters I took about this time, and left at the houses of our former friends, were little better than begging-letters. However no good came of them. My mother had not learned how to beg properly, and, as she still frittered away a great deal of money, all she could muster when the eventful day came was only eight sovereigns (I believe the Rules cost ten), and these she spent a long time in doing up in the most lady-like way, and writing a letter with them that might have touched the heart of a stone. It did not touch that of the Warden, however, and the next morning brought back the card and the money, with a brief refusal. What a disappointment it was to us! My father, however, took the affair very philosophically, and, though he would perhaps have liked very well to be at large again I dare say, starring it about at races and steeple-chaces, yet he made himself comfortable enough under the circumstances, and when

my mother was not there his room became one of the noisiest and jolliest in the prison.

My father got a good deal mixed up with my mother's relations a little after this, and indeed it was through their instrumentality that he was eventually released. One of them especially,—I think he was a farmer,—became a great man with him, and used to come down to our lodgings in Melina Place, and swear he would see "my Lord out of it; ay, that he would, thof' he mortgaged the farm; which he was come up to London for to do."

I am sorry to say my mother praised this resolution very much, and I extended my patronage to him in such a condescending way that he proposed to take me home with him; an offer however which I abruptly declined.

It makes me sad even now to think of my father's meanness to these good people. How he grasped at their little savings, and took one hundred pounds from one and five hundred pounds from another—their little all; and how he persuaded a retired old sea captain, a simple-hearted man, the Nelson of the family, to sell his annuity; how civil he was to them. With what inimitable and instinctive knowledge of

what would please them most he called one Tom and the other Harry, and was "hail, fellow, well met!" with them; and how utterly and miserably, I know, he despised them all. As for them, they all swore by "My Lord," till they found themselves half ruined by him; and then each thought and called the other everything that was bad. My mother, of course, joined with her husband, and hated them with the utmost readiness with him, when they wanted their money back again.

My grandfather would, of course, do nothing. He toddled about to the clubs and to dinners, saying how ill he had been used, and how he had spent his fortune upon thankless sons; but he generally dismissed the subject with the good-humoured shrug of the shoulders for which he was famous, and never thought about us any further.

At last, however, my father got out of the Bench somehow or other, for even his creditors liked him; and, when they saw nothing was to be got but promises, agreed to take them instead of their money, without any very fierce opposition, especially as he assured them separately and in the confidence of affectionate intimacy

that he "would have some money (some of my boy's fortune, you know, but keep it quiet, there's a good fellow) in three months, and then I will take care, Smith, you shall have your *money*, let who will go without, for I must say no one could have behaved better than you have done throughout"—(perhaps Smith was the very man who had arrested him);—"and I must and will say, I feel deucedly grateful." By the way, here my father would go up confidentially, and speak in a low tone of voice, and as if talking to his brother or his dearest intimate friend, "You may fancy I am rather hard run with all this bother on my hands, and if you know anybody who wants to place a few hundreds, or even less"—(he always added this saving clause),—"at good interest, why, I pledge you my honour, he shall have his money back punctually, and any discount and per cent. he likes." My father used to speak so seriously and good-naturedly that he seemed to be conferring a favour, and many and many a time he has carried the day against stronger odds than steady-going people would believe. He had a sort of abstract passion for money, too, and whatever he had about him he was always ready to borrow

more. He would pay, too, as freely as he borrowed, when he could. He liked the mere manipulation of money, the chink of sovereigns, and the crisp rustling of bank-notes.

The same day that he came out of prison he had a four-in-hand and apartments at Mivart's. My mother, too, got back her jewellery, I rather think with her relations money, for I never heard that any of it went to pay the debts. Once more Lord Herbert Evelyn blazed upon Pall Mall and St. James's Street, the best dressed and the best appointed man in London; and that season my mother had an Opera box, one of the best in the house, too, for my father always did things well when he did them at all. Upon the whole, perhaps a week after Lord Herbert Evelyn came out of the King's Bench, he was spending at the rate of about twelve thousand pounds a-year. Alas! for the hard-earned savings of my mother's relations! I was sent to school.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a preparatory school, and was kept by a Miss Nicholls, who had great faith in the efficacy of putting us in the corner, and making us stand on a stool placed in the middle of the room with a foolscap on our heads. This was very painful to me at first, for I had been treated at home lately as if I had been so much older than I really was, that my dignity was very severely wounded ; but I soon grew accustomed to it as the others did, and then we thought it very good fun, and used to make

mouths at Miss Nicholls when she had her back turned.

Our school-room was a large gloomy old house, situated in one of those melancholy squares in the suburbs which were probably built in the reign of Queen Anne, and had all the joyless character of the architecture of the period, high small windows and underground rooms, low doors and wainscotted walls. How I used to hate it! It was pervaded, I remember, by such a peculiar and penetrating smell that our very meat was tainted with it when cold; and I could never eat any dinner on Sundays for this reason, as no cooking was allowed to go on in the house on that day. I now think the abominable smell must have been simply confined air, which probably had found no egress for half a century; but it was the nuisance of my whole life there. We were kept very strictly, unhappy little wretches that we were, though Miss Nicholls's was a first-class establishment of the kind. We were routed out of bed at seven o'clock on cold winter mornings, and taken down to those dreary kitchens under ground to be scrubbed, till the whole place was a scene of crying and lamentation. A lusty

servant-maid performed the operation, and we dreaded it as much as older people do tooth-drawing. The soap, a horrid, mottled, bad smelling soap, was forced into our eyes and mouths, and we were rubbed so energetically with a jack-towel that the ears of a new boy immediately acquired an inveterate soreness from which he did not recover till the holidays. Then the combing of our hair was dreadful; this terrible ogre of a girl must have had a very heavy hand, among her other qualifications for dealing with children, for she used to force the teeth of the small-tooth comb into our heads till it cut them like a knife, and tore out so much skin that we were almost sure to get slapped for being dirty.

This ceremony was however nothing at all compared with the dreadful affair of Saturday nights, when we were caught, one by one, and brought down to a damp stone kitchen to be washed all over, one after the other, in the same water. Oh, Miss Nicholls, you may have been a very good elderly maiden lady, and, indeed, I know you were, but you never ought to have kept a school, and I strongly recommend all whom it may concern to learn something of

your household arrangements before they are won by your virtuous and injured appearance to suffer little children to go unto you.

We were stripped, I remember, on cold rainy winter nights, and stood upright in tepid water to be rubbed down and scoured with flannels till we had not a whole place in our little bodies, and our eyes were inflamed for two days afterwards, and, oh, what colds and coughs we got! This, however, we considered, upon the whole, as a fortunate thing, for it was "nuts" to be ill at Miss Nicholls's, and we got chicken broth and possets, and nursing without end, on those happy occasions.

There was another piece of miserable cruelty too to which I recollect we were subjected regularly every Monday morning, and which has made me consider that an unlucky day ever since. Miss Nicholls was firmly persuaded that we all wanted a small wine-glass full of senna tea once a week, and she gave it to us with such scrupulous exactitude that it has probably had a hand in making many of her young friends more or less invalids for the rest of their lives.

In other respects we got on well enough; our

lessons were light enough, as easy as they ought to be for such small children, and, except that we learned an uncompromising hatred for the French language by being forced to speak it at refreshment time, we had little cause to complain of this part of our lives. But the system was radically bad; we had not play enough, we had not healthy exercise, and laughter and fun enough, for children; we were marched out in file, two and two, to Kensington Gardens or elsewhere, but woe to the urchin (I say urchin, for there were both boys and girls amongst us,—another mistake) who broke the ranks, or tried to vary the monotony of his march by a gambol on the grass. Miss Nicholls believed that grass made the feet damp, and that urchin was as sure of the stool and foolscap, or the corner, as if it had been bespoken for him.

Sundays, however, were our especial abomination, and I regularly feared the return of that dreadful day. On Sunday mornings we were scrubbed harder and got more soap into our eyes and between our teeth than on any other; we were combed till our heads felt quite raw for the rest of the day, and yet this was but the

beginning of our troubles. Before breakfast we were set to learn a collect which we did not understand, and which was not explained to us, and repeat it by heart. Then came a breakfast of stale bread, sour and mouldy, with that damp and dreadful smell, butter that had little right to be called fresh, and cold milk and water. Then we had to learn the Gospel and Epistle for the day. Then came another fiery combing that made our heads tingle again, and arrayed in stiff turn-down collars or frills that scratched our necks like a wire necklace, and, buttoned up and belted in within an inch of our lives, we were marched to church. Oh, that church! it is a wonder any of us ever had courage to enter one afterwards. It was a gloomy, dark, fearful place, smelling just like Miss Nicholls's back kitchen. It had a mournful organ that might have put the most cheerful man out of spirits; and a clergyman who denounced us every Sunday with such energy, and looked at us so awfully, that we were quite frightened of him. The very clerk seemed to menace us with the beadle when he looked at us; and of all that two hours' churching all we got were cramps and headaches, and stealthy shakings from Miss

Nicholls and the ushers if we went to sleep. On one occasion, indeed, I was shaken so violently that I determined to provide myself with a copy of the Arabian Nights as an anti-soporific in future, but, being detected, I was made such a warning that two birches were used up upon the tremendous occasion. I think at last I used to go to sleep with my eyes open, and, at all events, I am sure that neither I nor one single urchin among us understood any thing of the service, except the beautiful simplicity of the Lord's Prayer, and one or two others. Our Church Service, indeed, most excellent and sublime as it is, is not adapted for the comprehension of little children, and those who have care of them would do much better to read a few chapters of the New Testament to them, with a simple explanation, than take them to hear that they are miserable sinners.

Even after church our griefs were not ended; before dinner we had to repeat the text and give the chapter and verse of it, though very likely by that time the clergyman himself could not have remembered them. If we did not know this, which we never did unless it was very short, we were put to learn it, and again a

collect after dinner; then afternoon service; then bread and butter and cold milk and water for tea; after which we had to read each a chapter of the Old Testament aloud, hard words and all, and so go mortified and confused with it all to bed, hardly knowing if Saint Peter was King of Bashan, or Og was the disciple who betrayed his master thrice before the cock crew.

Some of us used to lie awake too, or have disturbed dreams, and cry out in our sleep frightened by the strong language and stern metaphors of the denouncing clergyman; or with our little brains painfully bewildered with fear of awful death and hell fire. Oh! Miss Nicholls, when you sat upstairs on Sunday evenings over your tea, talking scandal with your injured air among your friends, did you never think of this when you rejoiced over the well-spent day, and the pious education you were giving to the little people entrusted to you?

We had an usher named Miss Foss, a tall yellow looking woman, who dressed always in black bombasin, with white collars and cuffs; and the black was so black, and the white was

so white, and they appeared in such startling contrasts to each other, that she gave people the idea of a respectable female magpie. She was a perfect cavern of Engligh grammar and lessons of all kinds, and spoke exactly like a copy-book, in pithy little sentences, with a great stress on every word, as if it was written in large hand, or round text at least. We liked her too, and I am sure she was fond of us, for she used to do us all sorts of little stealthy imprudent kindnesses; and so sure as any urchin got punished by Miss Nicholls Miss Foss was sure to take that urchin under her protection for the rest of the day. In fact, her principal occupation appeared to be to undo whatever was done by her superior in office.

Poor Miss Foss! There was a prevalent impression among us that she was unhappy, and that she was a poor relation of Miss Nicholls, and not very well used by her; and that there was a surgeon who had gone out to Jamaica who had, at some period or other, paid her great attention; though how we became possessed of any of these ideas I cannot remember. I have often stolen into her

room of an evening, for I was a great favourite with her, and seated myself at her feet with the affectionate gravity of a child, while she would remain drearily by the piano, touching the keys with an absent air, and her gaze fixed somewhere far away; and then, after a little while, I could often feel the large tears falling one by one on my hand, and Miss Foss would lay her long wasted hand on my little head, and toy with my hair, and talk to me in such a different manner to her schoolroom way, that we used often to end by having a good hearty cry together. As this was always a prelude to the introduction of some cake or sweetmeats, which she kept in a cupboard, I wonder that it did not make me a lachrymose little humbug for the rest of my life. In short, there was nothing buoyant or healthy and cheerful about Miss Foss; and, I am afraid, her affection and little kindnesses did not do any of us much good. We were pitied when we ought to have been laughed at, and sometimes encouraged, from a mistaken and mischievous good nature, in doing what was positively wrong. Indeed she would go so far as to tell little fibs for us, or advise us to do so ourselves, and support us

in it, if we had done anything that was at all likely to bring the birch in requisition; though, I am afraid, she had a little weakness for the corner and the fool's-cap, subjecting us frequently to this discipline when she wished to get rid of one or two of us who might have been left at home in her charge while the rest were gone for a walk.

There are two other things which I must notice while I remember them, before taking leave of my school life. The one was, that we had too much pocket-money, and were allowed to spend it altogether in little selfish gluttonies. I am afraid Miss Nicholls found her own account in this, for the pastry-woman always appeared just before dinner, and when she went away very few of us had much appetite for the boiled mutton and rice pudding, which were the standard dainties of Miss Nicholls's board, for she fell into another capital error of schools, that of not varying our diet sufficiently. We had no education of the heart; we were never taught to understand the sufferings of others, or shown how they might be alleviated by the kind deed and the kinder word. It was a principle with Miss Nicholls that all poor

people and beggars ought to be sent to the treadmill, and a gentle refusal or a little charity was an example never offered to us. Miss Foss taught us plenty of false sentiment, but no one cultivated real and healthy feelings in us. If only one tenth part of the crying done by Miss Foss privately, and on her own account, had been expended on any proper object of sympathy, it would have done us less harm and corrected the natural selfishness of children, instead of making us little snivellers; and if we had been taught to apply properly only the same proportion of that money which we squandered in trash, to the diminution of Miss Nicholls's butcher's bills, it might have learned us the value of money and the only noble quality it has, that of doing good and healing affliction. We were all more or less rich people's children, and we might have been taught, with great benefit to our future characters, the Godlike power which lies in every mite well spent, and what a plentiful harvest of happiness a wise charity will yield to the receiver and the giver. Did Miss Nicholls know of no neglected little children, orphans and desolate, whose forlorn position we might

have understood and sympathized with, and to whom we might without prompting have given a tithe of our abundance to be expended on their education by some worthy poor person recommended by the clergyman, so that it might do good in two ways, or in any other useful way, for their benefit? Would there not have been an opportunity, too, to teach us prudence as well as charity, and impress pleasantly and cheerfully on our young minds some little practical moral on every such occasion? Let us suppose just for the sake of argument that there would.

The other great abuse to which I have to refer in Miss Nicholls's establishment, was that of receiving parlour boarders, or having a sort of aristocracy and democracy in her school, to the mental injury of us all. I was a parlour boarder, and I was hated for it. It is to this fact that I owe the early intelligence I received of having thin legs, a fact which my own unaided ingenuity had not enabled me to discover. It is to that I owe the nickname of Spider, which clung to me till I left the school, and that the other children complained I was a "favourite," and tried to get me into diffi-

culties with the lessons, and took me down, rejoicing, when I did not know them. I do not think, however, I had any real advantage in being a parlour boarder, except that of dining in a separate room with Miss Nicholls when she had not company, and being required at that solemn time to sit more prim and bolt upright and silent than was at all necessary, and to which I can even now trace a sort of absence of mind that has come over me occasionally at dinner ever since; for the mind will be busy, and if children may not prattle they will think of what others say. I would rather, I confess, that mine prattled than began to think of some things that grown people talk about too early, and especially at dinner time.

I was at Miss Nicholls's certainly much longer than was good for me, but at last I fortunately caught the croup after one of those terrible Saturday night's washings, and on Sunday morning it was found I could not with safety be put through the severe exercise of that day, and was sent to bed again, which was a great relief to me, and I recollect was looked upon by the others as another proof of that favouritism with which I was treated as a par-

lour boarder. Finding that I got worse in spite of senna tea and chicken broth, the doctor was summoned. This doctor was a jocular man, who addressed me as "Young rag-a-muffin," and expressed his opinion that I was shamming, though I was quite quick enough to notice that he shook his head gravely to Miss Nicholls, and said something about a "long business." So my mother was sent for, and, as I lay broad awake and feverish in my little bed that evening, she came, pale and in dishabille, for she had been ill herself, and took me in her arms tenderly, and fearless of infection, as a mother is; and, as she could not be persuaded to overlook the doctor's familiarity, he lost the practice of Miss Nicholls's establishment, and I was immediately taken home.

CHAPTER V.

From Miss Nicholls I was subsequently removed to Harrow; but, as I am not writing a regular autobiograpy, but only jotting down at random some of the passages in my life which I can recall the readiest to my memory, I shall not tell you, my dear Public, how I learned to write indifferent Latin, and to misconstrue Greek plays. I am afraid, however, that the training I underwent there made me a pretty good schoolboy, but did not endow me with many useful qualifications for the business of after-life. Our best boys indeed nearly all turned

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out dullards or mere pedants, and our worst have since become in many cases very bright men indeed. That for which I have principally to thank Harrow is, for having made me a good cricketer, and for giving me a community of feeling and reminiscences with many whom I have met with in other scenes, and long afterwards. It is for this reason that I would send my own son there, or to some other public school of equal repute, Eton or Westminster. A boy who has been educated there is generally a bold, hardy little fellow, above lies and meanness, and he grows up with the same ideas and feelings as the other young men of his age and generation. After all, too, there is nothing like the feeling one has for an old schoolfellow, even when one did not quite like him, and he was not in our own set. In other lands, and in the changing scenes of life, how my heart has always warmed towards a Harrow boy; and what a strong claim we have always seemed to have on each other in any time of difficulty or danger! I except the few of course who have grown up to wear stiff neckcloths and have become prigs, or enlarged the borders of their garments, till if one meet them

in the street one is obliged to stand in the gutter to talk to them.

I liked Harrow a great deal better than the holidays, and I looked at my old street and prison life with shame and disgust. I had an immense supply of pocket-money too about this time; much more than was good for me. For while the money of my mother's relations lasted I had at least my share of it, and it lasted a good while, for the establishment at Mivart's was carried on altogether upon credit, and besides my father had a run of luck on the turf, and sold Harkaway for the largest price that had ever been given for a horse,—eight thousand pounds.

This put us all in high feather for a time, and, with our relations' money, which there was never any intention, I fear, of repaying, might have kept my father above water as long as he lived, but the evil day came again, and often enough, as we shall see bye-and-bye.

I recollect one holiday, especially, which I looked forward to with no pleasurable feeling, and it was not with a very cheerful heart that I prepared to pass it at Marsden Court, a place which had been bought with part of Lord

Walter's fortune, and was to become mine when I attained my twenty-first birthday. My mother and father were gone to Paris, and from thence were going to Rome, so that I should have been in the way, and was left to pass the vacation how I could alone. Both of them loved me too in their way, my mother was even proud of me, and my father looked on me as the goose with the golden egg, who was one day to set him right with the world. But neither of them looked after me at all, and seemed to treat me as if I was grown up and independent of them. I think this partly resulted from the position in which Lord Walter's will had placed me. Parents seldom look with the same feeling on a child whose fortune is independent of them as they do on one who is to owe them everything. It destroys the great bond of protection, which is the strongest of all in families; though, Heaven knows, if my fortune had been left at the disposal of my mother and father, it would have been spent on the turf and at the opera in five years, perhaps in one. They had nothing to restrain them; no fear of the world's censure; for my mother never mixed in it, and my father lived among a set who attached blame

to nothing, so that a man paid his gambling debts.

So there I went at the end of my first half to spend my holidays all alone at Marsden Court, a lonely little monarch of all I surveyed, and though the time I spent there alone was fortunately short enough, or it would have made me a dreamer for life, it is to those holidays that I trace the habits of thought, and the love of solitude, which has clung to me ever since. I never liked the place; it had no old family associations, such as make a young heart throb; none of our ancestors or kindred had ever inhabited it. Lord Winnington, my guardian, received it as part of his mother's fortune, and she had been the daughter of a brewer, grown rich in trade. Becoming embarrassed, the title-deeds of Marsden Court took the place of some of Lord Walter's India bonds, and the place became mine, a slight increase of the allowance for my education purchasing my father's consent; as it would have done to any thing under the sun, if he had wanted money at the time it was proposed.

It was arranged that my father should live in it too, and keep it in repair till I came of

age; and, as he liked the credit of having a large place in the country, he readily consented to do this, and of course neglected it. It would have made the old brewer uneasy in his very grave, if he could have seen how his darling property was mismanaged. The right of free warren over the manor had been sold by my father to a sporting lawyer for the price of his bill, the gardens were underlet, and the rent for many a year paid and spent, or mortgaged; the very right in the grass on the lawn did not belong to us; and if I picked a daisy it was a theft. Long lean horses and starved donkeys and cows used to walk up and look in at the windows, wondering who I was, very likely; and sheep browsed in scores upon the lawn when they did not walk in through the broken French windows, and perambulate the ball-room. In the whole place there were only three rooms furnished, the rest having been swept clear, little by little, in repeated seizures for King's taxes, and the man who rented the garden, with his wife and an endless family of children, were the only tenants of the melancholy solitude. One thing, however, happened luckily for me. The stables had been let to a

training groom, and though I was at first rigorously denied admittance, my last five pound note, spent in paying my footing, won respect and an *entrée* for me. A few days after my arrival, also, the training groom's master, who was a friend (?) of my father's, came down to look at one of his horses, and learning that I was there, paid me a visit, and ordered a pony he had to be kept for me.

I used to ride about in the still mornings and quiet evenings, fancying that I was the Sultan Saladin, or Richard of the Lion Heart, or William Wallace, for my sole reading was an old copy of the "Talisman," with some of the leaves torn out. At first, too, I tried to give reality to the battles in which I was perpetually engaged while sustaining these characters, by making onslaughts on the poppies, and decapitating them with great ceremony when I had any one to put to death; such as the base Menteith, or him of Montserrat. I suppose, however, that even the poppies were sold at my Castle Rackrent, for a fierce man with a wooden leg, who might have bought them or might not, for there was nobody who could tell me, reproved me very sharply on the subject, and

I was sternly warned off the grass. If I had not been so lavishly supplied with pocket money (at uncertain intervals my mother would send me fifty pounds at a time, or my father would tell somebody to pay a lost bet to me), I should have had nothing to eat. Not a tradesman for miles would give me credit, for we owed money to them all. I was obliged to arrange, therefore, with Mrs. Peacock, the gardener's wife, to send me what I wanted, and I generally had a baked shoulder of mutton and potatoes, or a large grisly meat pie all to myself, at one o'clock, the Peacocks dining on it afterwards. Many a boy left to himself as I was, without guide, philosopher, or friend, would have been hopelessly ruined, and would have acquired a taste for low society that would have ranked him with grooms and gardeners for the rest of his life. I kept up my state, however, and dined very grandly all alone, nor, after the first week, did anybody except the man with the wooden leg venture to address me without respect, and he always got out of my way, save when he was drunk, and then he hallooed at me.

But what annoyed me most were the visits

of philanthropic ladies, who kept calling all day long, and wanted to rescue me from perdition. I could not put my foot outside the door either, when I had learned to lock myself in at home, without being waylaid by one of them, and reproved as a wayward boy, who was going the way of evil things, or caressed, and humoured, and pitied by people I had never seen before, and whom I heartily wished I might never see again.

"Why do you all worry me in this way?" I asked of a pretty little girl about my own age, who was dragging me in the wake of her mamma, a philanthropic lady of the first class.

"Because you are a bad boy, and we want to make you good."

"Who told you I was a bad boy?"

"Oh, Miss Slater and Mrs. Stapleton,—and —and ever so many people."

"I wish you would all leave me alone," said I, more ungraciously than I ought to have done with such a bright pair of eyes, looking at me so wickedly.

"But we won't leave you alone; we don't want to leave you alone; we want you to come

and stay with us, and get tame, and be a good boy."

"Who are you, girl?" said I, rudely, "and who is your mamma? I don't know her."

"Oh, fie! you are a rude boy; and cousin Harry told us you were so nice and clever. Why won't you be a nice boy to us?"

"I am not a nice boy," said I, sulkily, "and if you don't leave me alone, I will eat you up."

"You can't do that, because your teeth are not long enough, and mamma would eat you up first."

"Who is your cousin, girl?"

"Why, little Harry Howard, to be sure, who is with you at your school; oh, you wild boy! I will tell mamma you pretend not to know cousin Harry, and she will tell you not to tell fibs."

"I did not say I did not know Harry Howard; he is in my form. I said I did not know you; but if you are Harry Howard's cousin, of course I do know you. What is your name?"

"Why, Emily Howard, to be sure, you silly wild boy. You are not a clever wild boy, after

all, though you do help cousin Harry in his lessons. Why won't you be our friend?"

"Because you call me a wild boy."

At this point of the conversation, Mrs. Howard stopped for us to come up, for we had got a good deal behind, and walked slowly, like older people.

"Well, Emily," said that lady, "is Walter coming to dine with us to day?"

"No, ma'am," said I, "if you please."

"Oh! yes he will, mamma," cried Emily; "he is not such a very wild boy after all, and I have not told him yet that you found out in the big red book that we are relations, and that you and his papa were cousins."

I suppose there was no getting over the argument of the big red book, and I rather think I expressed an opinion to that effect, and said, that if it was written in a book that we were relations, I supposed they were also relations of William Wallace, and that therefore I would go and see them; and I did so. We became great friends after this; pretty little Emily and I were always together, and walked out with Mrs. Howard, philanthropizing, the only difference being that while she lectured

cottagers' wives, and gave them flannel in July, little Emily and I lagged behind and gathered daisies, and played together. They were pleasant days.

CHAPTER VI.

A LOST LIFE.

I soon felt at home with General Howard, who had married a distant cousin of my father's, and insisted that he was my uncle in consequence; he had a brother, a clever, thoughtful man, with a quaint, lettered mind, however, whom I liked still more. Like Sir Clifton he had been, in early life, in the army, for it was the family profession, and his race had been soldiers for centuries. Howards had come over with William of Orange, and fought in the ranks of James. There were Howards who were Counts in the Austrian and Prus-

sian military services, and Princes in Russia. Howards had gone over to instruct the troops of the Grand Sultan in civilised warfare, and to train the hordes of the Bey of Algiers, and wherever they had been they had distinguished themselves. Maurice was the first Howard, time out of mind, who had broken through the family tradition, and he in early life had taken to himself a wife, sold his commission, and began to prepare resolutely for the Church. Some difference, however, with the college authorities, owing to a dispute, it was said, with a Tuft of Christchurch, caused him to abandon his new profession, and he had subsequently settled in the country on a small property left to him by a distant relative. He rented and subsequently purchased one of the prettiest cottages in Hampshire, with a few acres of land round it. He became an oracle among small farmers, and corresponded with the local paper and the Gardener's Gazette on subjects connected with the management of a flower garden. He grew a peculiar kind of mangold worzel, of which he was very proud, and improved the potato considerably by the introduction of several foreign and more pro-

ductive plants. At the flower show he invariably carried away the prize, and his nectarines received honourable notice as regularly as the time for exhibiting them came round. His little crop-eared pony even was a rarity, and such a dog as he had for a companion had never been seen, surely, in the world before. He was churchwarden, chairman of the vestry, the infallible resource of any one (that is to say, among the good and the simple) who required advice or counsel, or wanted the services of godfather, executor, trustee, or protector. The quaint, kindly scholar! how patiently and nobly, with what good heart and cheerful purpose, did he labour in his little vineyard, and

> "Surely th' eternal Master found
> His single talent well employed."

Yet Maurice Howard was no common man, no parish busy-body. Had he gone into the Church he would, likely enough, have died Archbishop of Canterbury; his simple eloquence was so touching, and, schoolman as he was, so unadorned, his piety so pure and unaffected, his life so amiable and so blameless. I believe to this day that if any little of good

be in me, it is to him I owe it. The mind of youth is so impressionable to good and evil that I could hardly have made so valuable a friend at this period of my life.

There were not wanting indications enough, however, to a close observer, that the early character of Maurice Howard had been marked with strong traits of passion and deep-seated energy. Glimpses, sometimes, of an ambition which has made popes and cardinals, broke out from that mind usually so subdued and calm, and then a smile, which was half sadness, half content, would flit for a moment across his noble features, and the heart of Maurice Howard was again with his garden.

There was a singular attraction in his manner, it was so earnest yet so playful, and he had that happy art of pleasing children which is so often a characteristic of superior men. I am sure that when he first knew me I should have disgusted many men, and either met with harsh reproof, or been altogether passed over by them as a rude, troublesome little fellow. I had had the misfortune, and it always is a very great one, to live very little with children of my own age, and I had, there-

fore, that precocious maturity of mind which is very unpleasant in a child. I knew everything that I ought not to have known while I was the last boy on the lowest form at Harrow. I was familiar with stable slang, with the jokes of the London theatres, the last new novel read in the Bench; I could hum the airs of several operas, and knew all the stars of the theatrical world by name, as well as several anecdotes of their private lives, which I had picked up from conversations between my mother and her maid while she was having her hair dressed. I was fond, too, of displaying these stores of knowledge on very inappropriate occasions, and, little wretch that I was, I openly evinced my contempt for those who were not equally well informed in these respects.

Then I was arrogant, rude, self-willed, everything that I should not have been; yet I cannot remember one single instance in which Mr. Howard ever lost temper with me; and he had his own way of correcting my faults, handling the curb so lightly, that it was impossible for my boy-pride to feel wounded.

"By the way, Walter," said he to me one day, addressing me as if I had been in every

respect a grown-up man (people were apt to treat me in this way), "can you tell me where John signed the Magna Charta? I know you are fond of history."

"No, sir," I answered; "but I can tell you about the institution of the Order of the Garter (I had read it in a novel). A certain Countess of Salisbury" — and I went all through the popular story upon that order of knighthood.

"Thank you, Walter. Where did you learn this?"

I mentioned some old historian which had been quoted by the novelist, but perhaps my memory had failed me, for Mr. Howard raised his eyebrows, and answered, with a slight smile,—"Oh, I thought the author you mention had written in Latin, and I did not know you could read Latin yet."

"No," said I, "I can't read Latin; but I suppose Dr. Scriblerus can."

"So, then, it was from the Doctor's novel about Stonehenge that you got your story?"

"Yes," said I, feeling very little.

"And now about the Magna Charta?"

"Oh," I said, "I can't tell you anything about that; but the Countess of Essex,"—and

I was flying off to some scandal about Queen Elizabeth, when he stopped me by telling his son, a sly little fellow about my own age, to go and ask his little sister for Pinnock's History of England; a literary work bound in a paper cover, and which was much thumbed in preparatory schools when I was a boy, though, I believe, it has now been superseded.

"Let us look for the reign of King John, Walter," said he; "though this is not so great an authority as the one you mention, I dare say you can find me what I want in it."

"It was at Runnymede," said I, selecting my information readily enough.

"Thank you, Walter," answered Mr. Howard, trimming his vine; "the Magna Charta was a great event in English History, and I wanted to know something about it." It was thus that the scholar condescended to reprove the ignorance and vanity of a child.

He had a charming talent too of drawing little morals from slight events; and, I think, I hardly took a single walk with him without having it impressed on my mind by some trifling circumstance, which has remained fixed

on my memory ever since. It was a great privilege for little Emily and I to accompany him from the lodge to his cottage; and he had an old servant, named Hodge, a character too in his way, who always saw us home again. The fruit in his garden tasted pleasanter than that anywhere else, and it was with his children that I first knew what children were naturally and at home, and so became a child myself.

I remember one walk especially. It was on a fine summer evening, one of those soft mellow evenings almost peculiar to our English climate. The grass had been mowed, and soft summer rains causing it to begin to spring again, every meadow looked like a velvet carpet, with here and there some wild-flower peeping out, which, having bowed its pliant stem, had escaped the scythe.

"See, little lads and lasses," said Mr. Howard, pointing to one of them, "that pretty little flower must have been in great danger the other day when the mowers were here, yet it escaped because it was a good little flower, and got out of the way. It is one thing to bear anything that God sends, as this little

flower did the storm and the rain, and another to get wilfully in the way of danger. A silly flower might have stood still too, and said, 'Oh, I am sure to have my head cut off;' but this one knew that it was not sure, and that no evil ever is sure if we are brave and prudent."

We laughed at his making the little flower one of us in this way, but I have often thought of the moral since.

On we roamed over the meadows, chattering and playing round the kindly gifted man. I recollect the whole afternoon as if it were yesterday. The leaves of the trees rustled sportively over our heads, as if they were children too of an airier growth than we, and playing with each other. Men and lads driving home overloaded hay carts and whistling as they went, wound along the lanes, and at a little distance from us the night coach to London was putting to, at a rural looking inn, called "The Barley Mow," kept by its proprietor, and, when it was ready, the coachman mounted his box to call at the houses of the neighbouring gentry and ask if there was any thing for

"Lunnun." He touched his hat as he passed us with his high conditioned horses and glittering harness. What a gentleman he looked too with his immense black whiskers, his white coat, and showy shawl tied round his neck, for though it was summer many a black heath lay between Marsden and London. I almost envied him, and, full of the sort of excitement which I well remember the passing of a stage coach always occasioned in me when I was a lad, I suppose my feeling appeared visibly enough to one who was a keen reader of the human face. Little William Howard shared my opinion too, and cried out, "Oh, papa, I should so like to be a coachman."

"Should you, my boy?" said his father, with the tranquil smile that was habitual to him, "so would Walter, I am sure, just now. But look, do you see that cock pluming himself on yonder gate and crowing out so bravely? I dare say he thinks himself a very fine fellow and perched very high. But I cannot say that I think so much of him as I do of an eagle, in spite of his showy feathers; do you?"

"Oh, no, papa."

"Well, my boys, you will understand what I mean some day. I dare say you would both like very well to be coachmen now. But beware of little eminences in life, and fine positions easily won and which promise a vast deal of the kind of pleasure you are fond of. When you get older, you will see that there are many men in life whose useful and noble pursuits entitle them to rank with the eagle when compared with a stage coachman."

I have never wished to be a professional Phaeton since then; yet the profession was popular enough in that day, and numbered one or two lords among its members. Mr. Howard, however, made it appear vulgar, even to children, in a minute.

We continued our walk, and presently got into one of those long shady interminable lanes that are a peculiar characteristic of the county of Hampshire. Now, General Howard had brought William and me two whips the last time he went to London; they had remained our grandest treasures ever since, and we went popping them about so vigorously all day that we seemed to be always accompanied by a

discharge of small arms. We had not gone far down the lane when we met a hay cart belonging to some small farmer, and accompanied by a dirty, a very dirty boy, all rags and ruddiness, with white hair and blue eyes, and an expression half surly, half stupid.

Mr. Howard was fond of talking to the country people, and, as we passed, said to the young waggoner, "You have got a fine load of hay, my little man."

"Noa, I aint," roared the boy; "it aint ourn."

"Where are you going with it, then?"

"To Squire Greaves, to be sheure," cried the boy; "whear shud I be a-goin? I aint your little mon, neither." So saying, he drove defiantly away.

As we walked on we all gave vent to our opinions about the little waggoner.

"What a rude boy!" said William.

"What a naughty, bad boy!" chimed in little Emily.

But I went farther, and said that "Some people were naturally envious of gentlemen, and that it was to be expected," with some

other commentaries on our own superiority; sentiments which I had probably read in some novel.

Mr. Howard smiled, and answered, "I dare say he thinks himself quite as good as we are, and it is very proper that he should, though he need not have been so rude."

"Oh! he can't be such a silly boy as to think he is as good as we are," said I, smacking my whip.

It was an unlucky illustration, however, of my argument, for the sturdy little waggoner answered the smack of my whip by lengthening his own, and cracking it till you might have heard the noise for a quarter of a mile.

I felt this as an insult, and popped my whip again and again in the vain attempt to eclipse him, but every time I did so he let off such a volley with his as effectually silenced and brought me to shame. I heard, indeed, the little rogue's impudent laugh of contemptuous triumph when he found that he had silenced me, and he cracked his whip again and again in insolent victory.

Mr. Howard, however, was amused by the

contest, and let me go on quietly till my arm ached, and I gave in silently. "You see, Walter," said he, then, "that there are some things in which even that little waggoner has the best of us."

CHAPTER VII.

Muss i dann, muss i dann, zum stadte hinaus,
Und du mein schatz bleibst hier,
Wann i komm, wann i komm, wann i wider komm,
Kehr i ein, mein schatz bei dir.
Kann i auch nicht alle weile bei dir seyn,
Hab i doch mein freud an dir,
Wann i komm, wann i komm, wann i wider komm.
Kehr i ein, mein schatz bei dir.

Yes, those were pleasant days, wandering about with little Emily Howard, gathering daisies, and talking about William Wallace (or listening to the gentle wisdom of the scholar), and, were I not very firmly persuaded that "whatever is, is right," and that nothing happens here below without a wise purpose, I should still think it would have been better for me if they had lasted longer. Nothing does a

boy more good than the society of girls; and I have been a shy man with ladies all my life, for the want of this early training. Without having been brought up constantly with ladies in childhood, a man may, indeed, afterwards become a sort of hero with the fair ones, and may have a good deal of success; but he will never be a real favourite with ladies generally, or feel entirely at his ease among them. Many a man with the reputation of a Lovelace would almost as soon have a tooth drawn as be presented to a stranger lady.

My holiday-time alone at Marsden Court was, however, destined to come rather suddenly to an end; for, all at once, my guardian began to remember my existence, and, one evening, just after tea, at Mrs. Howard's, and as I was sitting down beside Emily on a little form, and preparing to tell her the story of the Red Comyn, Tom Rogers, the training groom, cantered down the carriage-sweep, and, seeing me at the open window, pulled up suddenly, and, taking off his hat, drew a letter from under the yellow silk handkerchief, which, besides his head, it habitually contained.

"Do you want me, Mr. Rogers?" said I,

not knowing what to make of his important appearance; "How is the bay colt?"

"Why," replied Mr. Rogers, "the bay colt is neither here nor there; he's middlin'; he is or was this mornin', when I see him last. But there's this here letter, as I found comin' 'ome, and seeing 'mediate on it, why, I thinks, thinks I, I'll just ride over to General Howard's with it, as I'm goin' that way."

Tom Rogers would not have confessed upon any account that he had gone out of his way to do a civil thing, as, in reality, he had in this instance, and very often did in others.

"Thank you, Mr. Rogers," said I; "will you give me the letter, if you please, and accept this for coming over?" and I handed him the now almost obsolete coin called a crown-piece.

Tom did not take the money at first; I rather think he was ashamed to do so; I was still such a little boy; but at last he suffered me to put it into his hand, while pretending to stroke his cob's mane. But even then he twisted it about awkwardly between his finger and thumb, as if it burned them, and said, "Well, Master Evelyn, I did not come over,

not expecting anything." But at this moment, Mrs. Howard, coming to the window, asked him to go into the servants' hall, and get supper. So Tom touched his hat, rather as if by accident than otherwise, pocketed his crown-piece by mistake, and, five minutes afterwards, had become the oracle of General Howard's stable. Meantime, I looked at my letter.

What a wondrous letter it was! almost the first I had ever received from a stranger. It was written on and enclosed in paper about the consistence of stout cardboard, and it actually cracked at the folds, in the excess of its importance. It had a seal as large as the crown-piece I had just given to Tom Rogers, but was directed in a small, cramped hand, which, I remember, made me laugh, and suggested a comparison not very flattering to the writer. The address ran,—"To (this word was up at the extreme corner, on the left) Master Walter Evelyn, Marsden Court, Hants" (and pushed up in a corner, as if it had tumbled there, was the august name of my guardian), the fifteenth Earl of Winnington. Every letter, even, of the name, however, was misplaced, and all of them seemed to have got excited at their po-

sition, and tumbled one over the other, in the most entangled and absurd way possible. Nobody but the inspector of franks could ever have read that signature properly without knowing it.

"Why don't you open your letter, child?" said Mrs. Howard; "I see it is from Lord Winnington. Bring it to me, and I will read it for you; and you must give me the cover,—I can use the seal, to help make a card-case; and the signature in the corner I should like to have, for an autograph,—Lord Winnington is a very great man. Let me see his letter."

I took it up to her, and resumed my place by Emily, intending to begin the history of the Red Comyn without further delay.

"Walter!" cried Mrs. Howard, presently, "what an odd boy you are! don't you want to know what your guardian says to you?"

"No," answered I; "I am going to tell Emily the story of the Red Comyn."

"Nonsense; leave the Red Comyn alone to-night, and come here. Lord Winnington wishes you to go and see him; at least so I read his letter, though it is not very clear."

"And must I go?"

"To be sure you must, if he asks you, as I think he does; stay, let me read the letter again,—it is all parenthesis."

"Really," she continued, after another attentive perusal, "I think he must mean you to go. General, will you read this letter?"

"What, a letter from Winnington! Why, my dear, it must be as difficult to decipher as an inscription on an Egyptian monument; and when you have read it, you will find it still harder to understand."

"But I really cannot make out if Walter is to go to him, or if he is not. Had not we better write to him, and say the child is staying with us, and that we will bring him over, if he wishes it?"

"What! write to a man, to explain his own letter, and, perhaps, be obliged to eat one of Winnington's dinners, besides! That would never do. He is Walter's guardian; so, at all events, the lad can do him no harm in paying him a visit. He had better go in our carriage to-morrow; it is not above fifteen miles off."

This being decided,—let me pause a moment, to introduce his lordship to the reader's notice. He is quite important enough to have

a fresh chapter all to himself; but he has had such a very long and grand chapter all to himself in real life, that suppose he comes in for the fag-end of this in our mimic one.

Lord Winnington therefore was a great man, a very great man. The fact of his greatness was the first thing that was impressed upon everybody who was at all ductile. There were not twenty men in England who had such a wide repute, or, perhaps, who were in reality more utterly and completely undeserving of it He had been everything that was grand or gay, and had filled the highest offices in the gift of the Crown. He was decorated with nearly every order of knighthood in Europe, without having ever done one great or distinguished act in his whole life. The fact was, he had lived all his life on the reputation of other people, and had been pushed into high positions, in which, having done nothing, he had got on. He was a general who had never smelt powder, a minister who could not write or speak three sentences of English intelligibly. This, however, is common enough; but he aspired to more. He was a connoisseur in the fine arts, who could not, without prompting, have dis-

tinguished a Rubens from a Titian. He was a composer, of whom, it was no libel to say, he did not understand a note of music; but he was fifteenth Earl of Winnington, and, though not himself of very pure descent, was connected by marriage with some of the very highest families in England. His father too had disinherited him, and, as Government very properly do not like poor peers, and as he had no opinions of politics save that he, the fifteenth Earl of Winnington, ought to come in for any good things that were to be had, successive ministries took his proxy, and agreed with him. He had a certain manner too with him that was taking and popular with people who did not know him well. He was always ready to shake hands and speak to everybody, and as no one could by any possibility understand what he said, they put their own construction on it, and liked him none the worse for that. Then he had given bad dinners to almost every person of note who was to be met with; and, although people do not like to eat bad dinners, they like them better than none; and there are a great many tuft-hunters in the world who think it a great thing to dine with an Earl and

become his *claqueurs* ever afterwards. At the first glance he looked quite an imposing person, but, if the eye of an observer travelled from the dress to the face, the twaddler and pretender stood revealed. His forehead was narrow and his nose long and shapeless, which gave him something the appearance of a snipe. His mouth would have told his character in a moment, and his eyes, which had a peculiar twist in them, were the most dishonest looking eyes ever set in a human head; they could not have belonged to a good man. His actions too were all sprawling and ungainly. Stooping, narrow-chested, large in the girth, straddling and rather knock-kneed, a more unknightly figure never wore a coronet. Many a young man left his presence wiser and sadder, and with his hopes and illusions chilled for many a day. Was fame worth having, when such as he were among the famous? That miserable incapable old man, who went about the world a shame to it! That borrower of other men's brains, bully, humbug, mountebank, driveller. impostor, blasphemer; faugh! He was great in blasphemy,—really great, I mean. He had as great a variety of oaths as any man living, and would utter them in a high, cracked voice, yet,

without the least excitement, till flesh and blood quivered with indignation at him. It is really a wonder the world did not find him out sooner; but it is a great thing, and very properly a great thing, to be fifteenth Earl of Winnington, and fortunately there are not many such as he who once bore that title, or the most rational and enlightened aristocracy that ever existed in the world would become a mockery and a byeword.

I never could understand how he could have been a friend of my uncle's, except from that unaccountable liking which all men have for those most opposite to themselves, and Lord Winnington was at that time Secretary to the Governor-General in India, and at the first budding of that stolen renown which afterwards blossomed so luxuriantly. Besides, Lord Walter knew nothing whatever of business, and probably thought, like many other worthy people, that there existed (as there ought to do) some wonderful Government machine or other to keep trustees and executors in order. I am inclined to think, however, that he knew Lord Winnington very slightly, and, as he had never gone much into society in London, and had therefore few acquaintances, when he found

himself dying he had confided his affairs to the first man of fair worldly repute whom he thought would undertake the care of them. It was but another in the chain of those lucky chances by which Lord Winnington had sometimes acquired the esteem even of the wise and good.

What a rich clutch it must have been for a needy man,—the uncontrolled management of an Indian hero's fortune for twenty years, and then only an executor's account to render afterwards, supposing I survived, or, still better, a disputed succession if I did not. How many times Lord Walter's fortune had saved him from disgrace and infamy nobody could have told but himself, though many might have guessed it. He treated it, however, as I afterwards found out, altogether as his own, and an excellent thing he made of it. His mortgaged estates were cleared. The increased parliamentary interest which it gave him earned the gratitude of successive Governments. And as for me, the future heir, he never once thought about me till some circumstances, which I shall hereafter relate, forced me upon his notice.

CHAPTER VIII.

Er hat mir's oft gesaght
Wenn ich ihn so geplaght
"Du Wirst noch oft-mals an mir weinen
Wenn ich gezogen bin
Ins ferne Ausland hin
Und bist alleine
So wirst du weinen."

A MORE charming woman than Lady Winnington, however, never graced a court. She was almost all that her husband pretended to be, and, though he treated her very ill, she had been his providence and guardian angel through life. She was the most perfect and high bred English lady I have ever seen; and did not you, my dear Public, know very well how marriages are made up, you would think I am filling my book with improbabilities in bringing

them together. She was beautiful! oh, how beautiful! without coquetry; gentle and refined, without affectation. She had real genius, without allowing you even to suspect it, till you knew her very intimately, and then it *appeared*,—she did not shew it. Scandal had touched her name,—whose does it leave free? but never did a high-born and nobly-mated lady better understand the duties of her position. She was a model to follow and to wonder at in every relation of life. In her presence even her husband ceased to be half knave, half goose, and became almost respectable. Indeed you forgot him—his stars, importance, fiddling, and all about him, save when his name was gravely and affectionately invoked for doing just the thing that ought to be done, and then you turned to admire the exquisite tact with which she brought him out and masked his utter futility.

There was none of that fulsome display of unfelt tenderness which marks the efforts of a vulgar woman who wishes to hide an aching heart, and a husband's worthlessness, for very pride, from the world. It must have been a keen eye and a close observer indeed who

could detect that Lady Winnington was unhappy, under that quiet, subdued, yet sunny smile, that graceful and composed manner, and perfect self-possession. Yet her attention was never off him; and before you had time to laugh in ridicule at his absurdity, or in scorn at his meanness, my lady had redeemed both by some happy turn in the conversation. He did not really like her, and he treated her with deliberate and systematic cruelty, even with contempt; but in secret he followed her counsel implicitly; and thus an establishment, which any other woman would have left angry or broken-hearted in a month, came to be looked upon throughout the land as a model of domestic happiness and propriety. The exquisite economy of its mistress enabled my Lord to indulge in every graceless and contemptible folly that suited the taste of a trifler and buffoon, and yet to keep up one of the most elegant homes in England; and his daughters married nobly, and his sons came to honour, for her sake. Dear, dear, and peerless lady!

I did not much enjoy my stay at Cleveland Park, for all my life I have had a sort of intuitive idea of people, which has seldom deceived

me; and from the first I liked Lord Winnington little more than he liked me, and avoided him instinctively. I liked the morning drives, however, very well, with Lady Winnington and Anne Stanley, her only unmarried daughter, who was about my own age; but I could not forget Emily, and I would much rather have been back with her. However, it appeared to be a decided thing that Cleveland Park was henceforth to be my home, and Lord Winnington began to talk of persuading my father to let Marsden Court on a repairing lease, to prevent it tumbling down. He never mentioned my father, however, but once, and then it was upon this subject, and he called him "Lord Walter."

"My papa's name is Herbert, my lord," said I.

"Henry! ay, so it is: I said Henry," replied Lord Winnington.

"Do you know, little Walter," said her ladyship to me that evening, when she came into my little dressing-room, as usual, to see that I was comfortable before going to bed herself, "Do you know that it was very wrong of you to take up my lord so rudely to-day about your papa?"

"But he called my papa Lord Walter," said I, "and then said his name was Henry."

"No, Herbert! Herbert is your papa's name, to be sure," returned Lady Winnington, with her sweet, sweet, smile; "but you won't be naughty again, will you? You see, I am going to take your dear mamma's place, and give you a lecture. Do you think she will be jealous of me?"

"Oh, no!" said I, with sparkling eyes; "do tell me, dear Lady Winnington, when I do wrong; I will always do what you tell me."

"I knew you would, and I told my lord what a dear good boy you were, and hoped he would not be angry with you this time; but if he is, you know, you must be very good, and not answer him again; won't you, now?"

"Yes," said I.

"And now, good night, and go to sleep, and get up in the morning, and go out with Anne," and then she kissed me, and that dear presence which was like a good angel about the house, glided softly from the room, leaving her smile behind her.

I think Lady Winnington, with a presentiment of what was to follow, threw me pur-

posely a good deal with her daughter Anne; indeed we were hardly ever apart. I walked beside her pony every morning, and then she would pretend he was naughty, and make me help her off and get on and give him a gallop, which I liked very much, and used to return to her quite proud of my horsemanship. Then we used to go into the hot-houses together, and gather fruit for my Lord's breakfast (everything was done for "my Lord" in that house), though I cannot say we were of much use, for the gardener cut it and took it in; but we served as an escort, and that pleased us quite as well as anything else.

What a fine boisterous girl she was, too, Anne Stanley! more like a schoolboy than a mealy-faced young lady. It was like washing in cold water to talk to her, and she never left me in peace five minutes in the day. She played me tricks from morning to night, and laughed at my little white hands and girlish ways, telling me to look at hers, which were the despair of her mother. She used to say she ought to have been a gamekeeper's son, and insisted on being called "Stanley," while I never could persuade her to give me any name

but Miss, or to talk to me without making faces. She was rather stronger than me, too, and used to delight in shewing it. She would provoke me to battle upon no pretence at all, and beat me soundly; but what she delighted in most was hunting me with her little dog "Fan," as vicious a terrier as ever had his tail bitten off, and entertained a spite against the world ever afterwards. They would soon overtake me, and then I was thrown down without ceremony and cut up like a deer, the wretched dog yelping and galloping over my face like a mad thing. What ticklish work that cutting-up was! It was generally performed with a drawing pencil, which was thrust into my ribs and under my arms (she knew all the ticklish places) till I roared again, and would make such a noise that Lady Winnington would send her maid to see what was the matter, and then I was ashamed. Anne, however, had not a grain of spite in her, and it was all done from sheer animal high spirits. She was a favourite with every one in the house, and the only natural person in it. She used to go and forage for us in the pantry and the store-room, and, as neither of us liked the seven o'clock dinner, we used to have a

feast usually of bread and jam under the trees, and she would tie my legs firmly together lest I should run away, and go laughing to fetch it, and then set her dog at me when she came back, till I yelled with fright, and learned to roll myself and tumble over like a squirrel at a surprising speed. When this had lasted long enough, the dog was called off, and my legs untied, and we set down (the dog between us on his hind legs) and devoured her feast, she treating me with great attention as the young lady of the party, and calling me all sorts of ridiculous names. Then, at night, if I escaped an apple-pie bed, there was sure to be salt, or cut brush or thistles in it. She put ghosts and phosphorus too about my room, and gave me cold pig every morning long before I wanted to get up.

After a week or two, however, I got as strong and as hardy as she was, and one day after having been hunted with great glee till I could scarcely stand, I got my back against a tree and stopped. She closed with me in a moment, like a little Diana, pencil in hand (the hunt always took place after her drawing lesson, which was at twelve o'clock, and the conclusion of which

was the signal for romps for the rest of the day); the struggle was long and boisterous, and, to give it additional vivacity, she barked like a dog. This gave me an advantage, by helping to exhaust her sooner, and at length, "Oh, Walter! dear Walter! let me get up, and I won't call you a girl any more," told me I was victor; and fortunately she never disputed my superiority afterwards, or I might perhaps even now lose the laurel.

CHAPTER IX.

I was making good progress at Harrow. I had got through the thorns and brambles that choke up the gateways of knowledge, and was already in the temple. My work was a real pleasure to me; I could make Latin verses as fast as Mr. Moses' poet can English ones, and I was generally looked upon as a promising boy, who would take high honours at the university. Unluckily, however, my mother, who had begun to live almost constantly in Paris

found she could not be happy any longer without me. At the end of one Christmas holiday, therefore, I did not return. In vain the masters wrote and represented the life-long injury it would be to me if removed so early; in vain even the kind-hearted head master personally added a warning, which was half an entreaty—I never went back.

Oh, those takings away from school, how they do ruin a boy! and how many a brilliant scholar who might have been an honour to his age and country has been spoiled by them! Regular hard work at school keeps boys of fourteen or fifteen out of a thousand scrapes, and if allowed to become men too soon they will regret it bitterly enough when they feel themselves old at thirty. It is surprising, too, how soon they forget all they have learned at school, and, to whatever gifts they attain afterwards, this loss is never regained. Very few boys, too, who are not kept hard at their books till they go up can obtain university honours, and they are very well worth having (let reformers say what they will) as a sort of patent of ability through life, whatever may be their intrinsic value as a gauge of talent.

Youths, too, are almost invariably idle if left to themselves, and, though intolerable to others in society, and always in the way, they like it amazingly; and the intellects of the very brightest men often seem to lie fallow during some years at this period of their lives. When a young man of eighteen says adieu to boyish studies for once and for aye, well and good. Leave him alone, he will have his brief hunt after what he has been told is pleasure, and then, weary and disgusted enough with the chase, he will return to them with increased zest, and commence applying what he has learned to some practical end, or he is a mere dunce, and will go about bored and boring all his days, and it is not worth wasting an argument about him. What I am now denouncing is woe to parents who, from selfishness, misplaced tenderness, or any other motive, take a clever boy away from his studies before he is ripe for the world. They are doing him an injury never to be repaired.

Paris in 18— had not yet become what it now is, a mere after-breakfast journey from London, and it was full of such people as Lord and Lady Herbert Evelyn. My mother, who,

from some reason or other, was not generally received in London, went a great deal into society in Paris, and was on terms of intimacy with half the duchesses of the Quartier St. Germain. My father, too, got very much into his element after a little time; became one of the lights of the Jockey Club and an oracle at Chantilly. For a long time, too, he was never bothered with duns in Paris, and seemed to be living his youth over again of unlimited credit and boundless expense. An English lord was a great man in France in 18—, but an English lord who lived like Lord Herbert Evelyn was quite a lion. We had a magnificent suite of rooms, I remember, and servants, carriages, and horses without end. My father's tastes and habits were such as prevented our receiving much company, for he dined almost always with his own set, and we did not see him sometimes for days, except on the box of his four-in-hand. My mother, however, went everywhere, and thus, on my arrival, I was promptly inducted into a tail-coat and a white cravat, that I might attend her. I found a good many boy-men of my own age, and we had it very much our own way, for

from twenty to fifty the modern French gentleman disappears altogether from the salons.

What a terrible tone French society has acquired since it was the school of all Europe for grace and chivalry! What squabbling and disputing I used to see go on in hotels that had echoed to the step of Grammonts and Richelieus! What systematic want of attention and even rudeness to ladies! and what deep-seated and inelegant depravity of morals! There was neither religion, or the faith, love, and truth which are born of it; all was puerile superstition, absurd fatalism, or monstrous materialism. A scepticism of all things holy, which, unlike that of the eighteenth century, disdained even to vaunt. Licence and passion had driven love from the hearts of men, and almost from the imaginations of women, and all was utter vanity and selfishness, exaggeration and emptiness, and neither honest purpose or lofty thought seemed to breathe throughout the land. Such was the school in which I learned my first lesson of life and the world. Happy for us that our world is different.

It was not enough, however, that my poor mother did her best to spoil me by introducing

me into scenes unsuited to my age; but my father also wished to try his hand at it, and did so after his own heedless way. I have remained all my life a slight man, but I was a very shadow of a boy; and once, when my father had some heavy bets upon a race, he determined that I should ride it instead of himself. From that moment I was never free from some engagement of the kind; for, riding pretty well, I generally won, and that got my name up in such a way that my reputation almost eclipsed my father's, to his excessive delight and amusement.

I got into all sorts of bad habits. I got money from my mother, who was never tired of giving it; and I had bachelor dinners of my own, to which men old enough to have grown wiser and better came, and initiated me into everything I ought not to have known, and sat down to play at *ecarté* with me till morning afterwards. But my father's crowning glory was when I took his four-in-hand away from him, and drove up with it to the Jockey Club. His delight was unbounded, and we became inseparable companions for six weeks afterwards What an insufferable little dog I must have been!

It was in the midst of all this that I made one of those romantic friendships which sometimes spring up between boys with Simonet De Beaumont, and it is to him that I perhaps owe my rescue from an abyss of which I only now see the dark and dreadful depth. Another year of the life I was then leading would have ruined me irretrievably, and given me the tastes of the gambler and the jockey for the rest of my life,—or at best made me a bad copy of my father.

Let me try to describe a friend whom I think of affectionately while I am writing these lines, far as we may be separated by land and water. I say may be, because my friend is a sailor, and while I am describing him may likely enough come home from a voyage, and walk in and look over my shoulder. I wish I could hear his hearty, manly voice, scolding my servant in laughing interjectional phrases, as he always does while coming up stairs, and then his frank smile, and cheery "M'v'ci mon p'tit Evelyn. Je viens tout droit du bord, et, sauf que j'ai embrassé ma mère et ma sœur, je viens te voir. Eh bien, que fait tu de beau?"

Simonet de Beaumont was like no other of

his countrymen I have ever known. He was a *man,* open-hearted, bold, generous, gifted, and loyal. His every word bore the tones of the heart with it. In his whole composition there was not one grain of affectation or theatrical nonsense. If anything, he was too natural, and to those who did not know him seemed almost playing a part. Five minutes in his presence, however, was enough to undeceive them. I never knew any one who kept so firm hold of an opinion with such manly grace, and his opinions were very well worth retaining. He was even as a boy enthusiastically attached to his profession, and has since done more than any man in the service to improve it. Yet no man could be essentially less dogmatic or merely utilitarian; for his life has been a long poem, and his tone of thought that of a hero of old romance.

I used to liken him as a boy, and have often done so since, to Cortez without his licentiousness. In person, if you fancy the shape of a Hercules and the head of some valiant Norman knight, Simonet de Beaumont is before you. His light auburn hair, falling almost to his shoulders; the delicately-formed nose and

high-bred nostril; the frank, sagacious, blue eye; the beautifully-arched brows and royal, open forehead: you might have taken him when he smiled for a personification of Friendship; and his laugh was the most joyous that ever came from healthy lungs and a clear conscience. He persuaded you into his own way of thinking upon any subject (and it was always a right and manly one) with such a winning grace, that you were carried away at once. His natural eloquence was wonderful, perhaps because he was and is so earnest, and so sincere and single-minded.

I am sensible that I am mingling some traits of the man with those of the youth; but I have lived with him ever since on terms of such affectionate intimacy that I find it difficult to separate what he is from what he was; and, indeed, little is lost in abandoning the task, for he has hardly changed at all since I first knew him. He is one of those happy fellows who seem to enjoy eternal youth, and it is impossible to associate the idea of age or change with Simonet De Beaumont.

I do not know why he took a fancy to me, but from the time I first met him in his

mother's house we were drawn instinctively towards each other; yet I felt then, as I feel now, unworthy the friendship of such a heart as his. Few lads could certainly have been more different, and I must have looked contemptible enough with my airs and dress, half jockey, half *petit maître*, beside the grand, simple Simonet.

He lost no time in making a very considerable alteration in me however, for I soon yielded to his influence; as we do to those in whom we have implicit faith and reliance.

"Ah ça!" said he to me one day, after I had invited him to one of my dinners, "Voyons! Es tu donc millionaire plusieurs fois, mon petit Evelyn?"

I explained to him that I had good expectations, and that Lord Winnington was my guardian.

"Winnington — Winnington," returned he musingly, "I ought to know that name.— Mon enfant, ta fortune est en mauvaises mains. Je connais cet homme-là. Et quand même tu mange ton blé en herbe."

It was in vain I told him of Lord Winning-

ton's rank and high place, and assured him my fortune would be large and certain.

To the first he answered, that he knew more of "ce lord" than he could say, as the affair was not his secret. "Et, au reste, si tu as une grande fortune, faites en meilleure usage; soyez la Providence de ceux qui n'en ont pas."

From this time there was an end of my dinners and ecarté parties; and, instead of spending my evenings at the Jockey Club and my mornings on the coach-box, we passed the latter at the gymnastic school and visiting artists' studios. He was no contemptible painter himself, and generous as the day, so that we were always welcome; and we spent our evenings with an old colonel's widow, Madame D'Epernay, whose daughter he informed me, at a very early period of our acquaintance, he intended to marry when he got his captaincy.—Alas!—But I will not anticipate.

In the house of Madame D'Epernay therefore we were always quite at home. Her husband had been killed in the wars of the Empire, and she was full of stirring stories of

that brilliant period. Often and often have we sat listening to her till morning broke in upon us, Simonet sitting with his one arm round Nathalie's waist, and the hand of his other clasping mine; nor would he allow either of us to move an inch from him, and kept us in great order. He insisted also on making me drink tea with lemon-juice in it, a composition which he prided himself on making *à l'Anglaise*, but which did not quite agree with me, in spite of my nationality. I drank it, however, to please him, as I would have done anything else; and he held his little court in great state, except that we all three sat generally on the floor to be nearer the wood fire. I think I see his knightly figure extended there now, with his head raised, the long hair floating back, and his earnest, listening look.

I am not quite sure that Nathalie exactly liked this way of passing the time, and she certainly did not take the same interest in good Madame D'Epernay's stories as might have been expected in the daughter of their hero; for all of them related more or less to the exploits of the deceased, who must have been

a gallant soldier. However, she bore it all very well, for Simonet's sake, and, no wonder, for it was his birthright to be loved—almost to idolatry.

I could not help thinking sometimes as I looked at Nathalie that, pretty as she was, she was scarcely worthy of such a conquest as De Beaumont. But I have often observed that men of his character are unlucky in their choice of a wife. It was not very easy to explain the love of that great noble heart for a maid that was so far beneath him in that nobility of mind which was the only one he bowed to, and I could not help suspecting that he had done her and her mother some great kindness, and loved her because of it.

Subsequently Madame D'Epernay confirmed this, and when I went there one evening alone we did nothing at all but speak of him, and the late Colonel was not once mentioned. She said she owed everything in life, and life itself, to him. If she now had a roof over her head and bread to eat, both came from Simonet de Beaumont and Nathalie.

But it was strange how little she spoke of Nathalie, and never once called her her

daughter; she seemed even to love her own child for his sake, which puzzled me, though I began to understand what he meant, when he said "Si tu as une grande fortune, soyez la Providence de ceux qui n'en ont pas."

CHAPTER X.

Among the artists whom De Beaumont knew most intimately was a young man named Adolphe Moncy. He was a wild, erratic fellow; but Simonet, with the enthusiastic appreciation of talent which belonged to him, loved the artist only second to me, and we paid a visit almost daily to his studio.

If Adolphe had consented to work even moderately he might have become one of the

first portrait-painters of the day. I never saw any man who had such a wonderful facility for striking off liknesses by a few bold happy touches. But nothing could persuade him to settle to his easel, and he sold as caricatures, and for a few louis, work that, if finished with moderate care as portraits, would have brought him hundreds. He lived literally from hand to mouth. When he wanted a new coat, or got into debt with his washerwoman, he would paint away a whole morning, or perhaps a whole day if the necessity was greater than usual; but he never returned to the same work twice; and, though he was always sketching upon the walls of his room, or on the backs of love-letters, he never touched pencil or canvas to any useful purpose till driven to it.

Besides, he hated portrait-painting; and when he got a rare sitter, sent to him probably by De Beaumont, he made such an impudent caricature that it inevitably offended the object of it. It was instinct in the man, that inveterate habit of ridicule, and he touched the oddity, which every one has, as if by magic. He never would sketch even De Beaumont in any other costume than that of a sentimental

pirate; and he insisted that my face did not look complete without spectacles.

His room, which served for studio, bedroom, and everything else, had a comical little mattrass in one corner, which, together with a couple of tiger-skins sent him from Algeria, and an immense bournous from the same country, served him for bed and bedding; and I suppose he must always have slept in his clothes—a fact that did not much matter, as he never, except by accident, came home till morning. There was not a chair in the room; and in winter we sat upon his basket of fire-wood, turning it upside down when it was empty, and on the top of its contents if it were not. A chest of rickety drawers made a seat for himself, on which he always perched in some eccentric shape, smoking a long pipe, which reached the ground. The only furniture besides was a canvas and a three-legged stool. The canvas was always intended to become a great picture, and he would describe his subject to us with such marvellous eloquence, and tell us the exquisite details that he meant to throw in, till De Beaumont's fine earnest eyes would rest upon him lit up with admiration, and then all

of a sudden he would laugh and yell like a madman, or begin playing with the bones—a species of musical instrument upon which he was a great adept. As for the picture, perhaps the judgment of Brutus, or Belshazzar's feast (he always chose some stupendous subject of the kind), was scarcely sketched when the ground was filled in with monkeys playing at leapfrog (each having the face of some acquaintance), or some other wilful fancy of the kind.

Then he smoked always night and day till the air of the room was like a fog; and he boasted that his only food was fried potatoes. In personal appearance he was as singular as in everything else; that is to say, as different from the generality of mankind, though he is but a type of hundreds of young artists in Paris. He had the head of Socrates on a body scarcely more than four feet and a half high, with large feet and hands. His great delight was, however, in making himself uglier than he was; and he used to twist his face and body into such strange contortions that he looked like an imp of darkness, and he would make children in the street often scream with fright. He had a remarkable power of language, and

spoke when he liked with a playful grace and purity of accent that was positively charming. His mind seemed too to have all shapes, and he could pursue any train of thought with precisely the arguments and allusions calculated to illustrate it. I often fancied he would have been a great man in the first Revolution.

He had wild traits of generosity about him—all Frenchmen have—and I think De Beaumont first took a fancy to him from learning that he had used the largest sum he had ever earned in his life (in consequence of an illness) to portion the orphan sister of one of his rackety acquaintances, who had been drowned. Then he was brave in his way, and had a scorn for the world and for appearances, which pleased De Beaumont, though he laughed at it in his frank joyous way. He loved too to talk to him on abstruse and difficult subjects, and he lit up De Beaumont's grand ideas with such happy remarks and illustrations (when he was in the humour) that they seemed his own: and indeed a fellow so gifted and amusing, yet more thoroughly worthless, hardly existed even in Paris.

He soon grew to form one of our party at

Madame D'Epernay's, and, though the old lady was a little frightened at his grimaces and odd ways, she paid him great respect, for he was De Beaumont's friend. Before he had been there three times, also, he had a caricature of our party, which drove Madame D'Epernay to despair, and annoyed me. But De Beaumont only laughed at it, and I thought Nathalie was actually pleased. It was a scene from Faust, however, in which they had the best of the picture, while Madame D'Epernay and I were very roughly handled indeed. I do not hesitate either to say that Nathalie's portrait was flattered, though his sharp pencil seldom condescended to pay compliments.

But De Beaumont was the least sensitive of any man in the world where he loved, and was one of those fortunate fellows who can, and who can afford to, laugh at ridicule. His fine loyal, unsuspecting nature could not entertain the idea of any unkindness to him being meant, and either I or the painter might have offered this man, who was the very soul of chivalry, almost any affront positively unheeded. He could not have been brought to understand it.

Adolphe Moncy, however, gave an additional

zest to our parties by his talents for music, and we soon had a piano, on which he played even brilliantly; and I believe he often gave lessons in the morning to Nathalie, whose play improved a great deal. De Beaumont sang capitally, too; and, as I had a gift for the cornet, we got on at a great rate.

But I observed with uneasiness a certain understanding growing up between Nathalie and the painter, which boded little good to De Beaumont. Simonet was the very model of a knight of romance with women—all grace and manly tenderness, but he was rather too silent, and he never *spoke* of his love, though it appeared in every thought and action. He had none of that whiffling activity about women, and those constant little attentions, of which the painter was so prodigal. The painter, however, watched her like a monkey, and before she could stretch out her hand or rise from her chair to fetch anything, he had divined what it was, and presented it. He was lavish, too, of the most brilliant and witty flatteries, sometimes far-fetched enough to make De Beaumont laugh, but he was pleased and flattered at the attention paid by his friend

to Nathalie, and expressed his loud frank admiration of him at every fresh sally. Somehow or other I could not join in those praises, though I often acknowledged readily enough to myself the wit or happy turn of the compliment. I began to look upon the painter with an ill-defined suspicion. I did not like his manner to Nathalie, and I fancied these flatteries pleased her more than they ought to have done. I told her so one day, and she told Simonet, who laughed heartily at it, and threw them together more than ever, without one thought of suspicion in his clear sunny mind.

It was was about this time that Simonet de Beaumont went to sea. Thirsting after distinction, and of a temperament naturally bold and adventurous, he volunteered upon a voyage of discovery to the Arctic Regions, for which an expedition was then about to be equipped by the Government. I had many misgivings about this voyage; and, knowing better than Nathalie, perhaps, how deeply and truly he loved her with his whole strong heart, I besought him, if he was determined on going, to send her at least away from Paris for a time, and confided to him the dislike which was

gradually mastering me for Adolphe and its cause. He listened gravely and kindly; I saw that he was even touched by my anxious friendship; he could appreciate that well enough; but even I could not turn him against another friend or shake his faith one iota in the loyalty of a man I felt almost by instinct to be false.

How well I remember our last evening together before his departure. He gave such a manly and glowing description of the adventure in which he was about to be engaged, and had such an earnest and intelligent conviction of the practical utility of its objects. Then he spoke with such chastened and feeling sadness about leaving Nathalie behind him, and with such cheerful hope of returning worthy of her. Throughout the evening his eyes rested on her with such unutterable tenderness, and every word sounded to me like what might have been a hero's farewell to his bride while buckling on his harness for battle. Nathalie seemed, however, to take his going away very philosophically, and Adolphe spoke about his voyage in a flippant jesting tone that jarred upon my own overstrung nerves inexpressibly. But Simonet, I do believe, thought her quite a heroine for

behaving so well, and construed Adolphe Moncy's ill-timed laughter into a charitable effort on his part to keep up the spirits of the party, calling upon me to take example by him.

It had got pretty deep into the night, when Simonet gave the signal for leaving the widow's house. I saw him glide a heavy packet into Madame D'Epernay's lap as he took leave of her, and he kissed Nathalie on the forehead with the touching and respectful tenderness of a Bayard. There was nothing but a slight tremour in his voice to shew that he was deeply affected at the farewell; but when we got out in the street he clutched my arm with the strength of a vice, and I saw something glitter in his eyes by the lamplight, which was certainly a tear.

"Eh bien," he said, with a slight sort of spasm. "Tu vois ce que je sens, je ne te le cache pas à toi. Mais j'ai été brave auprès d'elle, n'est ce pas? Mais, où est Adolphe?"

"Me voici, me voici!" cried the painter, joining us.

"Eh bien, mes amis, une cigarre chez moi, et puis adieu. Demain matin à sept heures je serai en route."

"Eh bien, va pour le cigarre et un bon ponch," said the painter, shivering.

"I take leave of you at Toulon," said I, "and on board the Triton." So thither next day we journeyed together. I was the last friend who shook hands with him before the ship sailed, and, with a broken voice, he confided Nathalie to my charge, and placed a little portrait of himself in my hand to give to her when I got back. "I do not ask you," were the last words he said, "to provide for her if anything should happen to me, because I know you will do so." Such was his noble confidence in all he loved.

I could only press his hand in answer as the boat pushed off, and the splendid vessel, which was to bear my friend to the regions of eternal snow, began to hoist her anchor and spread her sails.

"Farewell, gallant heart," I murmured to myself, as my boat neared the shore; "you have chosen the right path. He who thinks only of love, and so dreams his youth away, is therefore of love unworthy. Better far is thy stirring useful career, and scorn of idle dalliance, and nobler will be its reward."

I spent the rest of the day wandering about the narrow streets of Toulon, and visiting the ships in port and the arsenals, which, it is needless to add, are in every respect inferior to our own, though some of the larger men-of-war were admirably appointed and only inferior to ours. I do not think I was ever in a town which had such an oppressive and saddening influence on my spirits, and this altogether apart from my recent separation from De Beaumont, to which I was not only reconciled, but I was proud of my friend for understanding so well and fulfilling so truly his duty in life; and it seemed to me almost an insult to him, for me, his friend, to sit down idly and regret that he was at his post, and that, in consequence of the voyage he was now making, his name might one day be destined to rank with those of Columbus and Cortez.

A strong and penetrating wind, called "le Mistral," blew all day long, and carried about with it a fine dust that choked up the pores of the skin, and occasioned a most distressing irritation; though the month of May, too, it was cruelly cold—a cold from which great-coats could not protect you, and fires, or French

fires at least, would not warm. But what I had leisure to observe most was the curious unfitness of a Frenchman for salt water. There may be of course exceptions to this. De Beaumont was as fine a sailor as ever trod a deck, but the generality of the nautical gentlemen whom I met with at Toulon looked very much like theatrical seamen, and very little like real ones. None seemed to have a hearty liking for the profession, which, in spite of the military conscription, is almost hereditary in the families on the coast, and is seldom chosen by any others. There are families at Toulon who have been sailors from generation to generation as far back as tradition reaches. But France will never become a naval power. Her citizens are no friends of the sea.

A strange story was going about, I remember, while I was at Toulon, and shows sufficiently the widespread corruption which existed everywhere under the government of the day. A capitaine de corvette, while out on a voyage, captured a prize engaged in the slave-trade, and selling his own vessel put the money in his pocket. He returned, however, coolly enough to Paris, secure probably of strong protection.

and called on the Minister of Marine, who inquired, as a matter of course, after the state of his vessel.

"I have sold it," said the Captain.

"Sold it!" answered the Minister, aghast with astonishment.

"Franchement, oui."

"Miserable!"

"Ecoutez, mon Ministre. I have sold the corvette, but I have taken a larger vessel. Eh bien, l'un vaut l'autre. If you punish me you will be called in question for having given me the command in the first instance; whereas, if you give me another grade and make me capitaine de vaisseau, everybody will say, 'What a meritorious officer! and what a Minister! He has captured a prize, and voyez sa recompense.'"

"But the money?—les Chambres!"

"A bagatelle! the corvette was no longer sea-worthy, and the price of an old hulk has given to France a first-class vessel perfectly equipped. Convenez, M. le Ministre, que j'aie raison."

Whatever reason the Minister might have seen in it, the fact is certain enough that the

capitaine de corvette very speedily changed his epaulettes for those of a capitaine de vaisseau; and what is more, the whole navy did not feel outraged and insulted by it, but thought the whole thing a capital story.

CHAPTER XI.

For who would trust the seeming sighs
Of wife or paramour?
Fresh feres will dry the bright blue eyes
We late saw streaming o'er.
CHILDE HAROLD.

I LOST no time, on my return to Paris, in going to Madame D'Epernay's to give Nathalie the last love-token of him who was then upon the waters far away. I found the old widow still much distressed, and even drinking tea (with lemon in it) in a toilette only fit for the dressing-room, an infallible sign of utter prostration even in the oldest Frenchwoman. I was pained, however, to find that Nathalie had gone to the Louvre to see a grand picture

which Adolphe Moncy had been talking himself into the idea that he intended to copy. I could not help letting this regret appear, though I did all I could to hide it, and Madame D'Epernay swayed herself too and fro in her chair, and at last confessed that she had done all she could to prevent Nathalie going with the painter, but in vain. I saw, too, that her dislike for him was as strong as my own, but that she did not like to confide in me the full extent of her suspicions, hoping, perhaps, that all might yet be well.

I did not understand then, though afterwards it was made plain enough to me, why she did not exert her maternal authority over her own daughter and insist upon being obeyed; but when I mildly hinted that she, perhaps, did not hold Nathalie in sufficient restraint, she only shook her head despondingly. There was evidently some secret with which I was not to be entrusted, and as De Beaumont had not confided it to me I felt that I had no right to seek to become possessed of it through any one else. A very little pressing I saw would bring it all out, for, though Frenchwomen can often keep a secret for those they love with wonder-

ful tenacity, yet the old lady was depressed and sorrowful, and I felt that she even wanted to confide in me. It became my duty therefore purposely to turn the subject, and I did so.

Few persons could have been more unlike each other than Madame D'Epernay and her daughter. Yet the widow had been pretty in the heyday of her life, and still seemed to remember her conquests by the unfailing grace and neatness of her toilette; but she must have been always rather serious, one of those people who are fond of what is called *scenes* in life, and are always having imaginary quarrels with people about nothing, and making it up with effusion. The death of her husband also and two sons (one among the snows of Russia and the other at Quatre Bras) had deepened, and given some excuse for, her natural sadness. When she was not telling stories, therefore, or doing good for somebody, for she was very active and charitable, she invariably had the toothache, or "mal aux nerfs."

Nathalie, however, had all the wild vivacity of the South, and was more like an Italian than a French woman; tall and slender, with large bright black eyes gleaming with passion,

yet void of thought, or what the French call "esprit," large, and not very well formed features, and hair dark and glossy, but somewhat thin and scanty. That which, however, in her seemed to repel love and always chilled me in her society, was a certain habit of deceit in trifles, which seemed almost second nature in her. I could not divest myself of the idea that she might one day commit some terrible crime, and, though I banished the thought sternly as a kind of treason to my friendship for De Beaumont, it would recur to me at intervals and at the most unexpected times.

However, as she did not like me, I was perpetually fearing that this might have some influence in my judgment of her, and I therefore forced myself to treat her with almost brotherly kindness, in trying to fulfil the trust De Beaumont's last words had confided to me.

"Dear Nathalie," said I to her, one day, about a month after De Beaumont sailed, "should you not like to go to Dieppe this fine summer weather? My mother is going, but, if you would rather stay in Paris, why I will stay too, and take care of you."

My proposal I saw took her by surprise, but

however I repeated it, and dwelt upon the pleasure of the trip. It was impossible to get a direct answer from her. She was "Very grateful, she felt my kindness; perhaps—but Madame D'Epernay was ailing, and she could not leave her dear little cabbage of a mamma," she said.

In vain the widow protested that she was as well as ever she could expect to be. Nathalie only danced about the room, and plagued the old lady into leaving it an open question. When I returned, however, in the evening, she mentioned the subject herself, hoped I would not think her a naughty capricious little girl, and found out that her dear little cabbage of a mamma was in excellent health, and that the journey to Dieppe would make her still better. It was therefore arranged at once that we should go on the following Thursday (it was then Monday), and I was heartily glad to be able thus to get her beyond the influence and society of the painter; hoping to persuade her subsequently to make a trip into England, or elsewhere, and thus keep her away from Paris till De Beaumont returned, and then all danger would be over. I congratulated myself not a

little on this diplomacy, and thought I had concealed my object admirably, and accomplished it with great address.

Let the gentleman who ever hereafter plumes himself on any such victory look warily into the matter before he rejoices. My little plan had been not only perfectly divined, but I found out afterwards that I was actually doing the very thing I wished most to avoid, and playing into the hands of De Beaumont's rival. Unfortunately too it turned out that I could not accompany Madame D'Epernay and her daughter to Dieppe; but they went, and found Adolphe Moncy already there.

CHAPTER XII.

Les femmes voient plus loin que les hommes.

My mother always had an idea that I should make a great man, and though she fancied, I think, that my acquaintance with De Beaumont was making me a little too serious, yet upon the whole she was glad to see me gradually withdrawing myself from the race-course and the gaming-table. She did not, however, like my connection with Madame D'Epernay and her daughter at all, and both she and the Countess de Beaumont did all they possibly

could to estrange me from it, thinking that they were low people, who had duped my friend into a boyish passion which would have passed away long before he returned, and that meantime they would endeavour to entrap me. It was impossible to persuade either of them out of this fixed idea; for women, I have always remarked, judge harshly of each other.

When I told my mother, therefore, that Madame D'Epernay and her daughter were going also to Dieppe, and begged her to be kind to them while we were all there, she kept her own counsel, but determined in her own way to frustrate my plans. I think too that, independently of the ineligible connection into which she fancied I was being drawn, she had a horror of early marriages, and her own life, perhaps, warned her sadly enough that a man's character should have become formed and steady before he takes upon himself the grave responsibility of a household. It was to some silent manœuvre of hers, therefore, that I was probably indebted for the following letter from Lady Winnington, though there were circumstances enough that might have produced it, and probably would, even if she had remained quiet.

"My dear Walter,

"I am afraid you have quite forgotten us, and Anne is wondering what has become of you. Do you mean to grow a Frenchman altogether, and come back some day and frighten us with a beard and a chapeur? We are here now all alone, and it would be but kind to pay us a visit, now the season is over and the country so pleasant. Lord Winnington is still detained in London by the sitting of Parliament, and, as I believe, he has, after a great deal of pressing, consented to go as Ambassador to ———. We shall remain here most likely all the summer and autumn, or perhaps not even join him till the spring. We have a nice little party here, however, and just the sort of people you like. There is Captain Ireton, who has distinguished himself so much lately in India; and Arthur Sinclair, the poet, who has been making "fureur" in London this season. Tell me you will come; we are all dying to hear from you; Anne especially, though she pretends not to care about it; and, as you were such old playmates, I should take her part if she was angry with you for not writing these six months. Your old room,

looking out on the park, is all ready for you, and Anne has been making it quite gay with some water-coloured drawings of her own. Among them is a view of Harrow, where we passed a whole day, in the season too, while she was taking it. But this was to be a secret. Adieu!

"Yours, sincerely,

"CATHERINE WINNINGTON.

"P.S.—I had almost forgotten that my lord told me to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from Lady Herbert Evelyn, and to say that he will have the pleasure of calling upon her on his way through Paris."

"Of course you must go, Walter," said my mother, with a decision rather unusual to her.

"But, my dear mother, I had engaged to spend the summer with you at Dieppe."

"No, no, indeed you must go. The Countess De Beaumont and I shall do very well together, and she is a far more proper person than you are to look after Mademoiselle Nathalie; and I will promise you myself to visit her constantly, and—and take her to the theatre, if there is one," added Lady Herbert, laughing,

and trying to dispose of the question, for she was altogether unequal to anything like an argument.

I did not very much like the arrangement, but I was getting a little tired of Paris, and conscience reproached me with not having behaved quite so attentively as I ought to Lady Winnington. Besides, in any case I should not be long away, and, as I thought, by arranging the journey to Dieppe, I had separated Nathalie from the painter, and that under the protection and surveillance of Madame De Beaumont and my mother little harm could come to her, I reluctantly agreed to accept Lady Winnington's invitation; and my mother put it out of my power to retract, by making me write an answer immediately, naming the day when I would arrive there, and herself superintending the arrangement of my journey.

Lord Herbert did not like it at all, however. I was a pleasant companion for him; and, though we were not very much together, he liked to know I was with him, and to talk about me and my great expectations, and make bets about my riding. Latterly, too, I had had a good many interviews with showy, whis-

kered gentlemen, who spoke with a nasal intonation, more or less remarkable; and my father would push a parchment deed, or a few stamped pieces of paper, across the table to me, "to witness, Wat, my boy," as he used to say. Though what there was to *witness* did not always appear quite clear to me. However, I used to sign my name always with great consciousness of importance and satisfaction. I rather prided myself upon my signature, and added dots and flourishes to it without end, in case it should be forged, a precaution which my father highly commended; and he used to hand me sometimes even strips of blank paper, purely for the pleasure of seeing me sign them, after which he always had an extraordinary flow of high spirits, and used to brag about that poor rickety old manor-house, Marsden Court, as if it had been Houghton or Eaton Hall. My poor father! I found out the meaning of all those signatures clearly enough afterwards. He set his face resolutely against my going away, therefore, till persuaded into it by my mother, on the plea that I ought to see what was doing with my property, when he yielded readily enough; affectionately warning me, however,

not to take up with Winnington: "A fellow," said he, "who rides like a dancing-master, and never had a good horse in his life. He is a deuce of a whist player, however, and if you play have him on your side, Wat. Conyers used to swear he cheated."

CHAPTER XIII.

Il faut dans le commerce des pièces d'or et de la monnaie.—
LA BRUYERE.

THE very first person I met at the end of that miserable little passage from Calais to Dover was a young gentleman with a most unhealthy pair of light moustaches, and the very last Paris fashion of waistcoats and cravats. He had arrived in the same boat, confining himself, however, in his luxuriously fitted up travelling-carriage, and was now giving some directions to his courier, in a language that would have been totally unintelligible to any one else.

"A London, damme! no, Londres, that's it: à Londres, and be quick about it; depechez; ne pas arretez,—I shan't stop in this hole."

Seeing me when he had got as far as this, he stopped short, and, looking at me attentively, cried out, "Why, Walter Evelyn, that cannot be you?"

"What, Berkeley! To be sure it is. Well, how are you?"

"Pwetty well, pwetty well; but my confownded couwier dwives me nearly mad. I suspwect he has been smwuggling fwings; and that's why he does not like to gwo on at wonce. But how did you leave Hawwow?"

"I have been gone more than a year."

"And qwite wight too. Much better being in London and Pawis, isn't it? What a jolly thing it is we have met. Shall we make a night of it at the 'Ship?' or will you come on in my cawwage to London? You always get bad salmon at the 'Ship:' let us go on, eh?"

"With all my heart," said I: and, post-horses being ordered, I found myself with an old school-fellow whom I had not seen for two years, for he had left Harrow before me; and we were soon as cordial and boisterous as boys

just loose from school usually are under the circumstances.

But let me describe my companion. Sir Harcourt Berkeley was the son of one of our oldest north-country baronets; and, having had a very long minority, would come into a immense fortune as soon as the law placed it at his disposal. Something of a dullard at school, though always popular, he had now blossomed into a dandy of the first water; and, having entered the First Life Guards, had acquired a reputation, even in that regiment, for his good humour and boundless extravagance; and there was every probability that his fine estates would pay somewhat heavily for the experience of life which he was now courting so eagerly. For the rest, he was a fine, powerfully-built fellow, excelling in all athletic exercises, and with an open, manly expression of countenance. His peculiarity—everybody has a peculiarity—was a voice pitched in a key rather too high, and an unconquerable lisp.

Young men who have been a little while in the world are as fond of patronising those who have not, as young wives are of chaperoning girls in their first season. It was broad daylight

when we got into London, for we had travelled all night; and, though the excitement of our meeting had driven away all thoughts of sleep, Sir Harcourt insisted on my going at once with him to the barracks to make the acquaintance of his brother officers over a breakfast which he assured me had been ordered these "thwee days."

After breakfast was over, at the commencement of a London day, that is, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, we sallied out again, and I think in the course of about two hours I had my name written down at seven or eight clubs, to which Harcourt assured me I *must* belong, and made the acquaintance of every fashionable tailor, boot-maker, saddler, and money-lender between Belgravia and Cockspur Street. And then we drove back to barracks at a pace that kept the blood mantling in my cheeks, while my brain was on fire almost with the whirl and excitement I had undergone since I stepped on English ground the day before.

The mess dinner finished me; and I have never felt in such a maddening flow of spirits since, as when I found myself once more seated

in Harcourt's cab, and driving down to the Opera at about eleven o'clock in the evening. How bracing and delightful the cool air felt, and how gay the lamps and many carriages, flashing their lights upon us and receiving ours when we passed each other, as though exchanging salutes!

"We shall be just in time for the ballet," said Sir Harcourt; "the opewa's a baw." How our tastes alter: a year afterwards he was music mad.

It is a pleasant moment for a novice, that first time of going behind the scenes, though I got tired enough of it afterwards. Harcourt introduced me to so many people, that I soon despaired of ever recollecting their names or faces again; and, having whispered something to a gentleman with the showy style of whisker which I had so frequently seen of late with my father in Paris, that gentleman obligingly attached himself to me for the rest of the evening.

"Do you see that tall, awkward-looking old gentleman with the star on his breast?" said my new acquaintance, "there, talking to Mrs. Tyndal, who, under the name of Giulia Tari-

nelli, is going on presently to dance the pas seul? He is a great friend of mine—Lord Winnington, our new Ambassador at ———.''

"My guardian!" said I, surprised at finding him there: I should be surprised at nothing under the sun now.

"Your guardian?" said Harcourt, turning round, "how cuwious: so he is mine. Poor old Win! he is getting shaky, and the Tyndal bleeds him, they say, to a fine tune. You ought to know something about that, Lewis: don't you?"

"I know nothing," said Lewis, with a self-satisfied air, in which impudence and fawning were strangely blended; "but I dare say the little house in Bolton Street is not kept up for nothing, and the Giulia has got the lease of it, I hear."

"You *hear?*" returned Harcourt, laughing: "you *know*. I dare say you dwew it yourself. But, Evelyn, I forgot to pwesent you. Mr. Ephwaim Lewis, Mr. Walter Evelyn; a young gentleman coming into a gweat pwoperty. Walter, Mr. Ephwaim Lewis, the gweatest wogue in London. We call him the Sewaphim, because he knows evewy thing. You never

saw such a fellow," added poor Harcourt, concluding a speech that was one day remembered against him.

The Seraphim thus presented shewed a magnificent set of glittering teeth, and saying, "Oh! no; you flatter me: I know nothing. But, if Mr. Evelyn should want a few thousands, as I hear he is just come to London, why, you know, Sir Harcourt, I can oblige him."

"Why, you wolf," said Harcourt, "you don't expect me to deliver an innocent young lamb like this into your clutches, I hope? Come along, Walter, and eschew the society of the Sewaphim as you value your acwes. Let us go to the Giulia:" and, dragging me unceremoniously from the bowing Mr. Lewis, we were just in time to congratulate the Giulia as she made her last pirouette and quitted the stage.

"Beautiful! glowious!" cried Sir Harcourt, "I never saw you dance so glowiously."

"Why, what a goose you are," returned the Giulia, mimicking him; "I dance as glowiously evewy night, don't I?"

"Oh! yes, of cawse you do,—of cawse—you know that's what I meant," said the baronet, uneasily twiddling his fingers, and looking for

an outlet to end the conversation; for the guardsman was not equal to the light skirmisher whom he had engaged.

"Well, if you meant it," continued the Giulia, "why didn't you say it? And now, why don't you go and get up my carriage? and you shall come to supper. Old Win. is going to talk nonsense in the House instead of to me, and I want to be amused. But stay; what are you running away so fast for? Who is your friend with the fine eyes? You should tell him white cravats do not become him. They never do dark faces like his."

"Mr. Walter Evelyn, Mrs. Tyndal." (Aside to me, "The finest woman in London.")

"Come!" said the Giulia, "I will have no whispering. Run away and get up the carriage, while I talk to your friend; and, when I have made 'ma toilette,' I shall take him home with me: so you must get down to Bolton Street how you can. I like people with fine eyes; don't you, Mr. Evelyn? What a pretty name you have. Do you know my 'cher ami,' Lord Winnington?"

"Which question do you wish me to answer? that about the eyes, or his Lordship?"

"Oh! the eyes, of course. His Lordship is not worth talking about. Do tell me what you think of my eyes. I should so like to know."

"What could I think of them?"

"Capital! that's very well indeed, not committing yourself, like old Rigmarole. (I mean Lord Winnington, but I call him old Rigmarole.) Let him say what he will, he never means anything. But then, poor fellow, he can't; it's not his fault, you know, it's his misfortune. And now come with me, and I will show you where you are to stand till I am ready to let you put my shawl on."

Mrs. Tyndal had one of the best cooks in London, and her supper was my initiation into London life. It was nearly four o'clock when we separated, but then we were disposed of rather unceremoniously; for, a servant coming in to announce the Earl of Winnington, the Giulia jumped up in a fright. "Oh! that horrid old Rigmarole! I thought I had got rid of him. Lawk! what shall I do with you? Denis, show him into the drawing-room, and say I have got a headache, and laid down. I will come down to him presently. And now, Sir Arcourt (the Giulia always made mistakes

of this kind when excited), I ope your cab isn't in my street, because old Rigmarole don't like me to have young fellers here to supper. You must go down the servants' staircase, too, and let yourselfs out. Good bye, Mr. Eavylin, *au revau.*" How monstrously fond these sort of ladies are of mangling French.

"By Jove!" said Harcourt, drowsily, as we drove home in the glorious sunrise of a summer morning, "old Rigmarole is going the whole hog with the Giulia, and Lewis says he hasn't got a rap, and has been obliged to get his ambassador's pay in advance. Haw! haw! Fancy old Win. an ambassador! What a lark!"

"I wish I could have spoken to him," said I, with tipsy gravity.

"Spoken to him! Why he would talk a horse's hind leg off. I always want *not* to speak to him."

"But how do you manage about your affairs, then?" I bored drearily on.

"Oh, Lady Win. manages all that for me, and gets my allowance. By the way, she has asked me to go down to Cleveland Park. Let us go together—I like Lady Anne—the best fun in the world."

Among those who began to patronize me about this time also may be mentioned my grandfather, from whom I found a kind note, asking me to dinner, about three days after my arrival in London. There was a pleasant party assembled at the Marquis's table, and among them was my immaculate uncle Lord Staunton, whom I had never yet seen. He was a grave man, very unpleasantly and unnecessarily formal, even with his father, and dressed very ill. He had risen, however, in official life, and was now in the ministry. He asked me abruptly if I intended to come into Parliament when I was of age, and that, if so, he would speak to Lord Winnington to take some extraordinary steps to get up a strong interest at Marsden; or, with my fortune, I might perhaps, he added, with proper management, get returned for the county, which would bring our family interest up to seven votes.

"I would rather not go into Parliament for some years at least after I come of age," said I, remembering the subject of one of my conversations with De Beaumont.

"Not go into Parliament for some years?" returned my uncle, aghast. "Nonsense! you

can't take your seat too soon. Besides, there's an Opposition man sitting for Marsden, owing to your father having let the land. Depend upon it," he added severely, "if you do not enter the House of Commons early there is a great chance against your having much success afterwards:" and I think now my uncle was right.

"What is this conversation about Parliaments?" said my grandfather. "Staunton is always in harness. Don't listen to him, Walter, it will take away your appetite; and it is a great thing to sit down to dinner with an unclouded mind."

"Very properly said, my Lord," remarked one of the most active members of the late ministry; for men of all parties were welcome in Stanhope Street, if they kept good cooks, and knew how to appreciate them. "By the way, Mr. Evelyn, are you anything of a shot? I have some very good covers in Norfolk, if you would like to try them this autumn."

"Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes," muttered my uncle.

"Ce qui veut dire, Je crains les Danois et—et Donna Ferentes! Ma foi! Mais pas de

Grec," said the old Marquis de Courtrailles, whose *chef de cuisine* was his most intimate friend on earth.

"Marquis," said my grandfather, looking pensively at the contents of his plate, "your scholarship does you honour; but do not let us inquire after the Greek for truffles, since we cannot translate their flavour."

"For my part," said the ex-minister, "I never invite wits or scholars to dinner except upon field days. They make one's head ache, and the very wine acid by their presence."

"I never would know a wit in my life," said my grandfather: "they all bolt their dinners."

"So do great politicians," added the ex-minister. "Look at Staunton."

"I eat to live. I do not live to eat," said my uncle, stiffly.

"I do," replied my grandfather, "and find it much better than living for the House of Commons."

"Intolerable idea!" quoth the statesman; "but who does live for the House of Commons? not even Staunton. Yet there was a time when the House of Commons must have been very well worth living for. To hear

Charles Townshend's jokes, and Sheridan's sallies, and glorious Fox reeling from Newmarket or the gaming-table, must have been very good fun indeed."

"Yes," said my grandfather, "it was a gentlemanly place enough in those days, but I always heard Burke was a bore, and so was Pitt."

"It is frightful to think even now how the Bottomless Pitt devoured his half-raw chops. Fancy the Prime Minister of England eating chops!" returned the statesman, with what I had discernment enough to see was a fine but not very good-natured mockery of his host.

"C'est tres bien, cela—le Pitt sans fin, Bôtomly Pitt," cried De Courtrailles, proving how impossible it is to translate a bon-mot, and thinking that the English had at last found out that the enemy of France was their own.

"A very long catalogue, however, might be made of ministers who have been bon-vivants, even in our own day," said my liberal uncle: "it might end with Lord A——."

"A very pretty compliment, indeed," replied the statesman, "and I thank you for it. The very soul of business is a good dinner. I re-

member getting out of the greatest difficulty of my administration by means of one."

"Ah!" answered my uncle, "I did not know there was a *greatest:* they seemed so much alike."

"They were," returned the statesman, "and all trifles. The only things that ever bothered us really were your newspapers. You had some clever scribblers supporting you."

"Ah!" said my uncle, with whom the press was a sore subject, and who had rendered his government unpopular by a series of blundering attacks against the newspapers, "it is my opinion that the liberty of the press, as it is called, has been suffered to get too much a-head in this country, and it ought to be put down."

"I am quite sure it will put down all who are silly enough to try their strength against it," replied the ex-minister, who had a sort of delight in worrying my uncle. "I am glad to see your Solicitor-general has dropped that persecution against 'The Flying Post.'"

"Persecution! prosecution you mean, my Lord. Why, they said that . . . ."

"And wasn't it true?"

"That is not the question. The secrecy of Government must be respected."

"You may depend upon one thing," returned the statesman, "and that is, that the time for secrecy of any kind is long gone by. The question between governments and the press is not, as it was once, a question between wise and powerful ministers and half-a-dozen Grub Street hirelings. All ministers of modern times are obliged to keep up a close connexion with, at least, a portion of the press, and it numbers nearly all the first men in this country among its habitual contributors. Besides the majority of the higher classes, the readers of politics are quite as well instructed on all great questions as any minister can be, and they will know the probable course that he means to take, that they may judge if it be the right one. I consider the press to be the true parliament of this country; the great organ of the many classes and interests which are unrepresented in St. Stephen's; the sole thing that does away with the absolute necessity of universal suffrage in a free country, because every man who has an opinion may freely express it where it will be heard and

weighed. No newspaper can now keep up a merely factious opposition against any government: its readers are, as a body, too wise and unprejudiced. Good measures will always have supporters enough, and all the writing-down in the world would not injure them, if it could even be tried. But the truth is, it fortunately cannot, for newspapers must make themselves readable to intelligent and unprejudiced people, or they will not sell. Not one newspaper in London, however, I believe, pays anything like its expenses. When, therefore, a body of men representing some particular principle (which it would be absurd to call place-hunting) can be found to club together, and to pay from their private fortunes the enormous expenses of a first-class journal to explain it, it is perfectly clear that whatever their convictions may be, they are, at least, sincere, and therefore entitled to consideration; such men, when they court controversy, should be combated with their own weapons, if their ideas are unsound. This is what any government owes to the nation it rules—that all propositions for the welfare of the state should be fairly and fully discussed. People, now-a-

days, will not suffer ministers to grope about in the dark, or refuse to be enlightened. Newspapers diminish the talking in parliament by one-half, and many a speaker, tiresome and tedious in the House, does good service to his country by throwing his ideas on paper, and sending them to the papers. I go farther: I look upon the press as a substitute for the only advantage that was ever alleged in favour of rotten boroughs, viz. that they enabled the great and wealthy men who possessed them to bring forward rising talent. Formerly, however, they were often enough deceived, and many a youth wofully disappointed the expectations of his friends. Now the public is never deceived; the press is free to all; and, what is better, is a field for every possible variety of literary or political talent. It is not merely the connection of wealthy peers, or university men, placed in a position in life to attract the attention of some powerful patron, who have the chance of distinguishing themselves. The public care little whether the man who talks to them wisely is a dressing-case maker or the Prince Consort; and they have the proper meed of praise for each. Purifier of morals,

enlightener of minds, pioneer of truths unnumbered, supported by the great, and the good, and the gifted, as it is,—I look upon the press of this country to be the most respectable and noble institution that ever belonged to a free people. I heartily wish that all connected with it had, as they seem to be getting, a proper conviction of the high nature of their duties, and the responsible and elevated position which they have a right to claim in the scale of society, and which, some day, the able political essayists of their time will be generally understood to fill. A writer for the press should no more be branded with the title of adventurer, than a churchman or a soldier; and if he fulfils his duties with intelligence and discretion, he is the equal of the one, for he is the very shield and buckler of morality and religion, and the sword of Gideon against offenders, while he is incomparably the superior of the other. And, as for the name of adventurer, if it means a man who, starting in life without friends or fortune, has honourably won name and fame by his intellects, it is a title, a badge of honour, that should be held higher, in a country like England, than the

highest hereditary coronet which ever sat upon the unworthy brows of a rake, an idiot, or a buffoon. One thing is certain, that whatever minister quarrels with the press will be obliged to make it up again if he can, or go to the wall if he cannot, and drift away into chaos unlamented and unsung:

> "Baron's race throve never well,
> Where the curse of Minstrel fell."

What minstrel of old times ever sung a hero into fame like a line in the Gazette, or a leading article in the Times? Whatever minister therefore chooses to buckle on his armour against the newspapers, will find that he has not to deal with a few panic and poverty stricken scribblers, but with the might, and the right, and the intellect, of the first men in the land."

"How the habit of public speaking grows upon us," said my grandfather, with a slight but well-bred yawn. "My dear Lord A. you have been talking exactly twenty minutes: I am afraid we shall lose the divine Giulia."

"Never mind the divine Giulia," replied Lord Staunton; "I shall be glad to hear anything more Lord A. may have to say about his

friends the newspapers. We may find it useful. By the way, was that article in the Times yesterday, on the Oregon question, yours?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Lord A. "the secrets of Government must be respected."

"Ah, I thought so, but how do you defend?"

"Nay, my dear Staunton, we are not in the House of Commons, when we are I will answer you; but as for the article, if you really wish to know, I believe your own Chancellor could tell you more about it than I. Besides, The Times has been supporting you lately, and I hear you are divided on this very question."

"Humph!" growled my uncle; "then your informant was mistaken. Walter, Lady Staunton wishes you to be presented to her, and has requested me to take you home to-night, as she has a reception."

"You had better come and see the Giulia," said my grandfather; "I hear Winnington is going to carry her off with him to ———."

"Is Lord Winnington really going to ——?" asked the ex-minister, "what a pity!"

"Lord Winnington is a great man, and never commits himself," replied my uncle, and

an ornament to our side of the House. He leaves his proxy with ——."

"How ungrateful!" answered A. "His first friend in public life was poor Kennington, whom he displaces. As for his committing himself, however, I am not quite sure you will have much reason to be pleased with your bargain. He is the very man to get you into a scrape, not at ——, but at home. The press has sharp eyes there, if he trips, and 'My Lord' is no favourite with the knights of the quill."

"We shall know how to silence them," said my uncle.

"You will not find it so easy," returned A.

"Only to think, mon cher Marquis," quoth my grandfather, entering his box at the opera with that nobleman, "of my having a political discussion at a dinner of mine. It is all from asking my son. Lord A. is a very good fellow if left alone, but the other will tilt with him, and when unhorsed he gets angry."

"Tant pis pour lui," said the Marquis, "à la bonne heure v'là la Giulia, qui danse."

CHAPTER XIV.

Yet, o'er that house there hung a solemn gloom;
The step fell timid in each gorgeous room,
Vast, sumptuous, dreary as some Eastern pile,
Where mutes keep watch—a home without a smile.

My uncle was one of those extremely good people of cold regulated feelings who had hardly ever been betrayed into a folly throughout the whole of his private life, and he had neither sympathy nor mercy for those who had. His house was the most serious in London. He was hated by all the apple-women in St. Giles's, and was the absolute terror of all the petty shopkeepers in his neighbourhood. His servants were worried to death by him all the week with long unintelligible prayers morning and evening, and lectures upon moral conduct

on the most ill-chosen occasions. On Sunday, however, they were amply indemnified; instead of being tied down to the dull business of cooking and serving dinner, they had their time all to themselves from the breakfast of cold tea till as late as they pleased in the evening. It was the only quiet day of their lives, so that perhaps they had a right to it.

Oh, what a weary man he was! Stately and immaculate even to his own children. They could have seen nothing possible in him but a sterner kind of schoolmaster. He never laughed and played with them, and his smile was like vinegar, his caress a contortion.

I was introduced into an immense imposing sort of house, (Lord Staunton thought it becoming for a man of his rank to live in a large house now that he was married,) but it gave you the sensation of entering a vault to go into it. The porter, who was dressed in sombre livery, and was (as servants get to be) a bad copy of his master, looked like a sexton. He was relieved at the foot of the staircase by a man who might easily have been taken for an undertaker, while mutes seemed to stand drawn up on each landing instead of footmen. Then

the hall was ill lighted, and smelt like a bookseller's shop of tracts and parliamentary papers, whose essence was wafted from the library. The staircase was ill lighted, and the drawing-room was worse. My uncle, however, managed to pilot me through all these difficulties, till we arrived before a tall, faded lady dressed in black velvet and diamonds, but who seemed to have been keeping Lent all her life, and to this apparition I was presented.

"Charlotte, our nephew Walter. Walter, your aunt."

The lady in black velvet acknowledged the introduction more coldly and formally than was quite graceful, but I saw she meant kindly, and she bade me sit down beside her.

"I am expecting an old acquaintance of yours here this evening," she said, "and I dare say you will be both glad to meet each other. But why have you not been here before? I hear you have been in London some time."

"Only three days," I answered.

"But three days in London without calling upon your uncle is long enough, is it not? However, now of course you will remain with us."

I could see from this little sentence that my uncle was really a good man, though he made too much show of it, and thought I detected a kindly desire to make up for his life-long coldness to my father by protection and good will to me. I felt touched by this, and forgot all about the parliamentary conversation, as I was quite sure, whatever Lord Staunton's views regarding me might be, they had nothing at all to do with the invitation I had just received.

"My dear lady," I began—

"Why do you not call me your aunt?"

"Why, then, my dear aunt, I am going down to Cleveland Park to Lord Winnington's, who you know is my guardian."

"Very proper, very right and proper. I hope you will do all you possibly can to please him. We expect his excellency here also this evening. It is quite an honour to you to have such a guardian."

"Do you know Lord Winnington well, aunt?" I asked.

"No, not very well: he was only presented to me a few days since; but he is a man very much considered in society, and every one

tells me he is a most distinguished personage. He is to be our new Ambassador at ——"

The world of which such persons as Lady Staunton are the prime arbiters always judge a man by his success in life: only be lucky, and their suffrages are sure.

I make this reflection now as I am retracing the faint picture of the occurrences of the evening in question as they rise up in my memory. At the time, however, I believe I made none at all, for my aunt had scarcely brought the praises of my guardian to a close, when one of the sepulchral servants threw the doors open and announced

"General Sir Clifton Howard, Lady Howard, and Miss Howard."

My aunt had only time to whisper, "The great general who has just returned from India. He is to be Governor of Malta, but you know, of course" (even ministers' wives talk shop)—when my old friends stood before me.

I have seldom seen such a lovely and perfectly lady-like looking girl as Emily Howard. She was tall and slender, with a grave earnest expression of countenance, but there was a kind, homelike light in the eyes that redeemed

them from any touch of sadness. She was the sort of girl you would pick out from a thousand, as one certain to fulfil her duties, whatever they might be. A girl whom rudeness could not approach or levity trifle with. Yet the very soul of mirth was in her smile, it seemed the outward symbol of such true innocent happiness of heart. Her step was light as a fawn's, and—oh, rarity in English women—her carriage was exquisitely graceful, so that when entering a room she did not look like a grenadier advancing to attack a redoubt, or a dancing mistress.

We recognised each other at a glance; boys' faces do not change much till they get whiskers, and mine was a face not difficult to remember. The general greeted me roughly and kindly, still holding stoutly to the fiction that he was my uncle. Mrs. Howard forgot her philanthropical tendencies in the pleasure of the meeting, and Emily stretched out her little hand with all the frankness and affection of a child; so that we were soon talking together as pleasantly as in the days when we gathered daisies, and roamed over the meadows at Marsden.

"How you have grown, Walter!" she said; "but I should have known you again anywhere."

"How?" asked I vainly.

"How? What a question! By yourself to be sure; no two people are alike."

"No," said I, "but I was a boy then."

"Then?"

"Yes, and now——"

"You are a man to be sure, I had forgotten that," she added, laughing archly; "but still I should have known you, Walter, anywhere."

"I have often thought of you, Emily," said I frankly, "and laughed over our first meeting on the common round the old house."

"The park, you mean!"

"Well then, the park, if you like. And you called me a wild boy. Am I tamer now?"

"Why, let me consider. In the first place, sit straight before I answer you. Your aunt is very particular about her sofas, and then—"

"What?"

"My fan was not made to be broken; but of course if you will break it by twisting it about in that way, I suppose you must, as you

are the strongest, and may be still as wild a boy as ever."

I did not much like this kind of conversation, for it was the fashion at the time of which I am writing for the dandies of the day to wear ringlets on each side of their face, and I had cultivated mine with such assiduity that I began to fancy they were whiskers, and expected to be treated as though I owned those glorious insignia of manhood.

"I see you are angry about something," said Emily, "and, as nobody may be angry in a London drawing-room any more than they may be pleased, may I ask what it is about?"

"I have not seen you so long, and you treat me so strangely."

"Strangely?" said Emily, "nay, I treat you just as if we had parted yesterday, and so I feel, Walter, excepting always the regret that we have not met oftener."

"Do you really regret it?"

"To be sure I do."

"And do you think I should be welcome if I came over to you from Cleveland this summer?"

"Welcome! and why not? It is you who are behaving strangely."

"Yet I could not know how years might have altered you, and there are many things I should not have liked if I had paid you a visit too suddenly. For instance, you might have been going to be married."

For the first time Emily blushed; a quick, pleased, fleeting blush, but still a blush. "Oh, no! I am only seventeen, and I have not a single lover, except General Beevor, who proposes to me every time we go there."

"And has only one leg. Ah! then I need not be jealous of my playmate."

"And will come and stay with us?"

"And we will go out and pick flowers, and visit mamma's cottagers with her, and read those wonderful books together as we used to do."

"I shall be so happy:" and when she told the General and Mrs. Howard that I was coming down to see them this summer, they looked so pleased and cordial it quite warmed my heart.

"You do quite right," said my uncle gravely, "to make up to Sir Clifton Howard. He

has been buying a great deal of land in your county, and his daughter will be an heiress."

"To-morrow I shall expect you to come and stay here while you are in town. It is better for you than being at an hotel, and—and more respectable," added my uncle. "And now, good night, for I have some official instructions to give Lord Winnington in consequence of information which I learn has just been received by telegraph."

Poor Lord Winnington! with his head full of fiddling and operas, and the Giulia, to be obliged to undergo a midnight lecture from my uncle! He, too, had to pay for his whistle. He was just getting out of his carriage as I got into the street, and was cursing his footman as his name and titles were being announced through half a dozen better men in the most moral house in London.

"Oy, oh, ah, ay. Is that you Walter, eh, humph, so," said his lordship, who had the reputation of great conversational powers, "Well, where are you going to this time of night?" (This was his Excellency's way of being funny.)

"I am going home, my Lord," said I, laugh-

ing more at the man than his words, for he had a confused look, and swayed himself about and reared his long body in a manner that was remarkable to see. Then, as the door of my uncle's house remained standing wide open and was full of bowing servants, a crowd began to collect round us, and I was rather afraid his lordship intended to try his conversational powers on somebody among it, but suddenly recollecting himself, (what a hard task it must have been!) he heigh'd, and oh'd, and ah'd, and um'd, and rolled his wicked eyes about a little longer, and then wishing me suddenly good night, went grandly up the steps.

All the old ladies in London thought my guardian had wonderful conversational powers; but I could not help thinking, after pretty close observation, that their opinion arose from their always talking to him at cross purposes, which sometimes made his answers seem witty, or, still better, incomprehensible; and I noticed with admiration that he never paid the least attention to what was said to him, so that he could stand any amount of boring. Is not this, perhaps, the secret of some other conver-

sational reputations besides Lord Winnington's? I have often found great wits in ball-rooms, and very delightful talkers, mere impudent dullards when pressed home. But then it costs the veriest blockhead in high place so little to get a reputation of any kind he likes to give himself, provided he does not actually outrage and stamp upon people; and, even should he do this, he will have his admirers, especially among the ladies.

I was walking leisurely from my uncle's to Long's, counting the echoes of my footsteps in the summer night, and occasionally stopping to listen to a ballad singer, a vagabond habit that I have practised all my life, when my attention was attracted by two persons who were sauntering along immediately in front of me. In the one I had no difficulty in recognizing Mr. Ephraim Lewis, and the other was a gentleman of the same persuasion, whom I fancied that I had seen before with my father in Paris. They were talking earnestly, and, though I coughed once or twice to attract their attention, they either did not heed, or did not hear me, and I thus became a listener to their conversation.

"Done much with the swells lately?" said the gentleman from Paris.

"Yes, pretty well. We have done Sir Harcourt Berkeley's paper to a considerable tune, I can tell you. He will have to raise a heavy mortgage when he comes of age."

"Ah," returned the other with an eager sigh, "Vat large fortunes you have to pick over here! Paris aint nothing like it; I should shettle in London myself, if it was'nt for two or three of my friends at the Jockie Club. You have not got any of Sir Harcourt's paper to shell, have you?"

"Why," returned the Seraphim, "I don't know. I may be wanting a good deal of money soon, and the New London and Westminster, where I bank, don't know me yet, and are not good for more than a few hundreds over my account."

"Wot have you got? Tell us wot have you got. I can let you have two or three thousand, or more—much as you want—to-morrow. Eh! tell us now."

"Why," replied the Seraphim, "his paper will be in the market soon enough, I dare say, and you ought to know him, as it is, if you

had kept your eyes about you. It's young Walter Evelyn, Lord Herbert's son; he is to have a fine fortune from an uncle who died in India."

"Know him," cried the other, in a tone of great contempt, "I have knowed him this—more than a year. I knowed him as soon as he got to Paris."

"Is he in for much?" asked the Seraphim.

"About seventy thousand pounds," returned the other, "and its running on; no chance of being paid these four years."

"Humph," returned the Seraphim. "I must be cautious. Do you mean to let him have any more?"

"P'r'aps" answered the other, "now Old Winnington's made an ambassador; otherwise he was'nt good for much, and he's executor."

"No chance of any dispute about his minority, I suppose?"

"Oh, no! we've got his father too tight for that."

Impudent liar! thought I, as I went chuckling to myself down Bond Street, when he knows I don't owe him sixpence. Seventy thousand pounds, indeed—and running on.

Ha! ha! ha! I must beware of that rogue they call the Seraphim; and turning into bed I slept the sleep of youth and health, dreaming of Emily Howard, and that my uncle's was not such a very sepulchral house after all.

CHAPTER XV.

Oh, that fairy form is ne'er forgot
Which first love traced;
Still it lingering haunts the greenest spot
On memory's waste!

MOORE.

I WAS two or three days more in London, and stayed at my uncle's house, where Mrs. Howard and her daughter came frequently. I think I prolonged my stay in London partly on their account. Emily was so easy and unembarrassed with me, so unlike anybody with whom I had been thrown for years, that it made me happy only to be with her. We were very silent and thoughtful usually when together, for memory was busy with us; but our silence seemed to say more than words, and our thoughts were very pleasant ones. I do not

know, dear reader, whether you have ever known anybody you loved very much, and with whom you kept silent company in this way, feeling perfectly sure that the inmost thoughts of your heart needed no translating into words to make them understood. If you have not known such a companion, the worst I wish you is, that you some day may; if you have, I am sure you will agree with me, that you have seldom had a happiness so perfect.

Though our thoughts ran a good deal upon love, and the sweet dreams that young Romance loves to dwell upon, I do not think that either of us knew that we loved each other. I used to tell Emily she would be married to some great general, at which she used to shake her head wisely, and say that would never be. And then I used to tell her what sort of wife I intended to choose. Somehow or other I always described some one very much like herself; but she neither saw the resemblance, nor did I.

Mrs. Howard let things go on very quietly in this way. I was always welcome in Brook Street, where they lived during their stay in London, and the General regularly asked after

me if I did not appear at dinner time. No man was more truly kind or unaffectedly hospitable than General Howard, and in his way he loved young people as much as his brother, and liked to have them about him. He was quite a Providence to his aides-de-camp, and never could any man's table boast of more guests than were habitually and heartily welcome to it. This I must say did not always please Lady Howard; and most wives will feel with her that she was hardly used, for, when dinner had been ordered for six, it was no uncommon thing that twelve or fifteen people sat down to it, and the General's friends had mostly good appetites. However they were not very fastidious, and, as he always alluded to his delinquency himself during the entertainment, and was sure to joke about the toughness of the dish or two that had to be added in haste, his dinners were upon the whole the merriest, most unformal affairs possible.

My uncle dined there sometimes, but not frequently; his wife however often, she and Lady Howard agreeing together admirably, and both excellent women, full of all the household virtues, and all kindnesses. They had

always more to talk about than I should like to be obliged to hear.

Innumerable were the recipes for different delicacies of the table which passed between them, and their husbands might bless their stars over their conferences for many a golden guinea saved. They were both great breakers in and quellers of servants, and the characters of those who had once lived with them was made for ever. It was a pleasant sight to watch those two exemplary ladies relating their triumphs in this respect. How they had straightened the crooked minds, and utterly subdued the restiveness, of various obdurate maids and untractable footmen. How they allowed no followers (dear innocent ladies!), and no perquisites, and no anything else, and yet always had the best and most intelligent servants that were to be found. Lady Staunton would tell such stories of her own maid as would lead you to infer that if that exemplary young lady met with her deserts she would be married to no one less than the Lord Chancellor sitting in full robes upon the woolsack, and cheap at the bargain, ermine and all: while Sir Clifton's butler, who had been with

the General from the time he first wielded a wooden sword up to the present — why there never was such a man! His sayings passed into positive proverbs about the house, and I often used to think that dear good Lady Howard stood a little in awe of him, as some one belonging to the remote and mysterious period of her husband's bachelor's establishment.

The General and my uncle however did not get on quite so well together, though their friendship was of old date, and they had a cordial esteem for each other it did one good to see. But my uncle was a great formalist, and the General, when off duty, did not know what forms meant. My uncle was always shocked at hearing things called by their right names, and the General never called them by any other. Then he had a way of being funny which was not quite to my uncle's taste, and it was as good as a play to observe the Minister's uneasy smile when the General made one of his knock-down sallies, and to see with what anxiety and alarm he would sit watching for the next, frightened out of his wits to catch his old friend's eye, because he knew the circumstance

would be immediately followed by some jest that would make his hair stand on end, and shock his sense of dignity for the rest of the evening. General Howard too was one of those happy fellows who have not one atom of sensitiveness in their whole composition, and take amusement in worrying those who have. He was sure to find out anybody's sore place, and would keep on tickling it under the impression that he was affording great delight to the company as well as to the person so operated on and himself. He mistook their forced and wretched smiles for trophies won by his wit, and woe to the miserable man who dreaded raillery and dined with General Howard. He was certain to find him out, and then if he got peace for five minutes during dinner he was a lucky man indeed. My uncle, however, was his favourite game, and, like a fox that has often stole away from huntsmen and hounds, he gave increased excitement with every successive chace. I remember one occasion particularly when the General started his game in great style, my uncle having accepted an invitation to dine with him. "Aw, my Lord," began Sir Clifton with a glitter in his eye that

evidently meant sport, and mimicking my uncle's inflated manner, "Shall I aw-send you a piece of this beef? it is as tender as a minister's conscience." The General always did the honours at his own table himself, and would not have felt at home without his carving-knife.

"Thank you, General," replied my uncle, with a desperate attempt to be cheerful. "A glass of wine?"

"Too much honour, my Lord, aw! Sherry, Christie, to the right honourable Lord Staunton." Then changing his manner into one of pleasant pathos, he added, "Your health, old boy. We can't drink so much wine now as we could twenty years ago, can we? We are getting old fogies, I'm afraid, both of us."

Now if there was one thing more than another upon which my sore uncle was sorest it was about his age. He could not bear to have it touched upon. You might almost as well jest with him about his office; and, pluming himself up, he assured the General he never felt younger or better in his life, and that his father, whom he was fond of mentioning on such occasions, said that he felt precisely the same.

"Ah!" answered the General, "it's all very well, my Lord, aw, but neither your right honourable lordship, aw, aw, nor I either can hold out much longer to be of any use. I feel it myself. I am getting weak here, here in the upper story," he would add, with an air of pathetic conviction in the truth of his own words. "So you had better make hay while the sun shines, and get your old father made a duke at once, if he is to be one."

Now this, as I learned long afterwards, was the most cherished, and, as he fancied, secret aim my uncle had in life. He would not have divulged his hopes even to his own shadow till he fancied the time was ripe for their accomplishment; and there the General had struck him home, divined his very inmost thoughts, and spoken them out among twenty guests, who next day would carry them all over the town, and perhaps laugh at his preposterous ambition, for he had lived quite long enough in the world to know that it makes very little difference in its commentaries on a mere unsupported assertion and a well-authenticated fact; while the veriest absurdity, or the merest guess thrown out at random, is quite as

likely to obtain currency and belief as the *ipse dixit* of a bishop. Perhaps he would have given a year of his life not to have dined with the General on that day, for, his friend having hit upon a new topic, was sure to recur to it without mercy.

"But, tell me, Staunton," he repeated in a more serious and friendly tone, "is your father really to be made a duke?"

"I have not heard anything about it. Though to be sure my father is one of the oldest marquesses," returned my uncle, trying to hide his vexation.

"Aw, yes, an old marquess, aw, is he? We descend from the Conqueror, of course, and are to be made a duke because our ancestors stole some honest man's lands with that rascal William the First. Very pretty, my Lord, very pretty; is that the way you lords carry on the government? All very snug and nice to be sure! But take care the Whigs don't get in and spoil your game! Lord John is looking out, Sir, Lord John is looking out, you may take my word for it. Besides you will have to give up soon; you're getting an old man, my Lord. I feel myself getting

stiffer and stiffer every day, and you are two years older than I am."

This was a sort of argument from which there was no escape; and, if Lady Howard or somebody else had not made a diversion in my uncle's favour, Sir Clifton would have gone on repeating it in some form or other all the evening. The worst of it was too, that the other guests, young aides-de-camp and captains in the Guards, began to smell the game; and the General, encouraged by their smothered laughter, and delighted with his own wit, continued to worry his chace almost into a fever; and so sure as the stately Minister made any return to dignity and good spirits in conversation with somebody else, his hearty old friend was certain to see some pretext for renewing the sport. "My friend, aw, aw, my Lord there, the right honourable privy councillor, &c. &c. &c. Sir, very merry for his age. Don't you think, so now?" said he to Lady Staunton. "I must point him out to our young friends as an example to be followed." Here he looked towards a love-stricken lieutenant of two-and-twenty, who had scarcely spoken a word all the evening. "It would be

no wonder, however, if my friend the right honourable lord, &c. &c. &c. were to look serious with the cares of the nation on his shoulders; besides, he is getting an old fellow, like myself," added Sir Clifton; "but for young fellows (meaning the love-stricken lieutenant) to look so melancholy, why how do they expect to look when they are as old as my friend the right honourable Lord Staunton, &c. &c. &c.?"

I often thought it spoke greatly in my uncle's favour that he had been Sir Clifton's firm friend in good and evil fortune since boyhood; and if ever any Member was venturous enough to attack any of his operations in India or elsewhere, up rose the awful person and authoritative voice of my uncle, and extinguished that Member forthwith. He was the only person of whom my uncle was ever known to speak with affection, and, though not generally a very eloquent or effective speaker, he had once at least touched every heart in the House when moving the thanks of Parliament for a General "whom every Englishman might be proud to call his countryman, and by whom he was especially honoured in being able to num-

ber among his friends." This was very great praise indeed from my immaculate uncle. Yet I am quite sure when next they met, the General, with a tear in one eye and a smile in the other, took as much delight in worrying him as ever.

As for me, the General used to joke with me very unceremoniously about his daughter, and say, "Aw, Master Walter, we shall be expecting a wedding between you and Emily by and by, or I shall call you out, Sir, for trifling with my daughter's affections." This used to make the love-stricken lieutenant glare daggers at me, and amused my uncle greatly, as he always rejoiced when it was anybody's turn but his own, and he would spur him on with extreme delight to hunt me. But I did not give sport enough to please the General, and after a brief run with me, he would always return to my uncle with additional zest.

CHAPTER XVI.

Forth from the crowded streets, one summer day,
Rode the two friends; and cool and silent lay
Through shadowy lanes the chance-directed way.

At length, General Howard and his family having left London, one sunny morning Berkeley and I prepared to follow them, and towards the afternoon we found ourselves driving rapidly down the fine avenue of beeches that led to Cleveland. As we passed the lodge gates a gay party of ladies and cavaliers were riding out, and, though I had no time to exchange more than a parting glance as our britzska whirled on, I thought I recognized more than one of the party. There was certainly Lady Anne reining in that high-bred galloway, and

a pale romantic looking young man who rode beside her I thought as surely must be Arthur Sinclair, the poet.

"That burly fellow on the heavy cob must be Captain Ireton, though he don't look much like a hero," said I, addressing Berkeley.

"No, Ireton's much younger," answered the guardsman, "one of the youngest captains in the service; I believe not above twenty."

We arrived, at a fortunate moment, in a country house. Everybody was out. Lady Winnington and the elder guests were gone to visit some local curiosity or other which was being exhibited in the neighbouring town, and the younger members of the party assembled at Cleveland Park we had just met going for an afternoon ride, so that we were safe for our toilette and a bath before being introduced to the company. I don't know anything more annoying than to arrive at a great country house on a wet day, and when people have nothing better to do than to look out of window and quiz you as you get out of a miserable, cramped post chaise, perhaps covered with dust, and wearing a cloak and travelling cap, which you would by no means wish should

give their impression to your first appearance amongst strangers. I have known a visitor never able to get over a ridiculous arrival of this kind, and the most careful toilette in the world could not prevent his being looked upon as a quiz afterwards.

We had the advantage however of having already arrived, when the party returned, and of being expected, so that our descent during the uncomfortable half-hour before dinner was not looked upon as an intrusion even by those testy, gouty, dinner-loving old gentlemen who always consider a new arrival a bore.

Lady Winnington greeted me with all her old charm of manner, and her eyes lit up so kindly while she pressed my hand that I felt sorry I had delayed my visit so long.

Anne Stanley was however altogether changed; she advanced coldly and constrainedly towards me, awkwardly breaking off her conversation with the poet to do so, and then she stood quite silent, as if awaiting what I was going to say. I even thought I saw a frown on those frank, laughing brows. The poet too looked uncomfortable, and eyed me with a glance by no means friendly.

Lady Winnington hastened to the rescue. "Let me present you to our guests, Walter," she said, "at least to two of them, for I believe you know the rest—Captain Ireton."

The poet advanced and bowed stiffly.

"Mr. Arthur Sinclair."

Mr. Sinclair (my burly friend lately on the cob) bowed pleasantly, and I found myself in conversation with the poet,—so much for judging by appearances.

Captain Ralph Ireton was a young man of good family and an ancient name, ranking with the Hampdens and Bradshaws, the rough soldiers of the civil wars. At sixteen he had received his commission in a marching regiment, which fortunately for him was ordered out to India, and went almost immediately into action. So that the young ensign, instead of becoming the handsome hero of country quarters, destined to be arrested by a saddler, and finish a lost life at Boulogne, advanced rapidly by dint of sheer merit and hard service, got upon the staff of one of the most active generals in the army, and, circumstances favouring him, had attained his captaincy, and sent his name ringing all over Europe before his twenty-first

birth-day. Military men predicted a famous career for him; and his strict habits of order and discipline, his enthusiasm for his profession, his keen eye, and calm and temperate courage in time of danger, as well as his popularity with his comrades (a great element of success in life), seemed to augur that these predictions would be accomplished.

Yet I do not think I ever saw a man look more unlike a soldier at first sight. He reminded me of Kirk White. Though his profession had made him generally upright, he had naturally that slight stoop in the shoulders which usually marks the scholar, and the high, pale forehead, prominent eye, and delicately formed features that would have appeared to confirm this opinion in any one who did not know him. He had not the least sign of beard either, and had hands small, white, and delicate as a woman's. It was only when he was much excited that you might have remarked a rigidity about the muscles of the mouth, and a sternness in the eye, which separated the man of action from the dreamer, and seen that, though the man might feel and understand a poem, though his own life might be more like a

romance than a reality, he would never write one. Simple and curt, too, in his manners and address, he seldom said more than was absolutely necessary, and he despised all ornament or exaggeration in common conversation. His mind was rather collected and practical than fine or acute, and a very little knowledge of my new acquaintance was sufficient to shew me that (despite first impressions) in him was to be found the true type of the hero—of the men who have conquered or fallen in their duty since the world began.

Arthur Sinclair one might easily have mistaken for a wealthy tradesman. He had a large ungainly body, the members of which did not at all times appear to live on a good understanding with each other; a large head, rather awkwardly set on, splay feet, and large hands; his clothes were all too large for him, and their colours badly chosen. He had a confirmed stoop, and a voice pitched in the most unlucky and varying key; which qualifications, together with shy, uncertain eyes, complete the portrait of a great poet, and, perhaps, to a philosopher, would explain why he was one.

When you studied his face, however, the

mind shone out of it at every glance, though you must have acquired considerable intimacy with him to be enabled to judge of it. His manner was singular, for, really happy only in his library, he went seldom into society, and, knowing few people, he had a way of grasping at any one who was presented to him in a nervous and rather troublesome manner, while half an hour afterwards, when they had been replaced by somebody else, he would scarcely recollect them.

Once at home with him, however, once get him at his ease with you, and his conversation was as pleasant as healthy weather. The bright grey eye twinkled with wit and humour, or softened with pathos, and its shy uncertainty of glance vanished, while the odd voice became rich and melodious. His manner to ladies he knew was perfect in its innate and graceful courtesy and kindness; with those he did not know, however, it was the awkwardest thing in the world (all compliments and blunders). And so, shunning the world for which he was unfit by nature and by habit, the high-born and wealthy Arthur Sinclair shut himself up in the land of dreams and became a poet.

When I was introduced to him, therefore, he would have got away from me as he did from everybody else in a few minutes, but, fortunately, dinner was announced, and as I had the good luck to be placed next to him, with Lady Anne on the other side, and as she did not speak to me, while his neighbour was equally pre-occupied flirting with Berkeley, we were forced into conversation, and date from this moment a friendship that has never since been interrupted. Before dinner was over I had acquired quite a taste for rare copies of old books, and had remarked the strong, almost involuntary habit of observation, of getting sermons out of stones, which distinguishes all imaginative men. His conversation soon became richly tinted with the prevailing colour of his mind, and I saw that not a circumstance had escaped him, from the character of the blossoms of the heather, passed in his morning's ride on the stout cob, to the spasm, half delight, half pain, which had convulsed the features of a beggar-woman, to whom he had given a guinea. The talent I mean, indeed, can scarcely be called observation,—it was reflection. His mind was like a mirror, whose

nature it is to receive all the images that are presented to it, and he seized any peculiarity of character or striking circumstance, to remain daguerreotyped on his memory for ever.

For my own part I had no time to remark that the dinner passed off dully; but Berkeley informed me, confidentially, while smoking a cigar in the park before going to bed, that he had been bored to death; for a guardsman always being a great person in the country, a troublesome little lady, the widow of one of the county members, and nearly allied to the Winningtons, both by blood and marriage, had taken him prisoner bodily and mentally, and kept him in close custody by her side the whole evening. "To tell you the twooth too, Walter," said my goodnatured schoolfellow, "I wanted to talk to Anne. I like her vewy much; and that fellow fwom India is making up to her wather too stwong."

With what profound contempt the guardsman spoke of "that fellow from India!" It was the sneer of the butterfly at the bee.

"To tell you the truth," in my turn, answered I, "I can't understand Anne Stanley at all; she would not speak to me all the evening."

"Anne is a very cuwious gal," said Berkeley, with the air of a philosophic Lovelace, "and she dont't take a fancy to everybody; she did'nt to me, at first. You will get on better with her by-and-bye when you begin to understand her."

"At first!" exclaimed I, rather nipped, for this tone of superiority will put a saint out of humour, "why I have known her nearly all my life, and when I was a boy she used to thrash me like a sack."

"Hooway!" cried the guardsman, "did she, though? Anne 's a capital gal; I like her better than any gal I know, she 's got so much pluck and go about her."

"Hush!" said I, "here comes the captain."

"And, by Jove!" added Harcourt, "there goes Anne. What the dooce can they have been about on the tewwace? I shall watch that fellow."

"Good night!" said Ireton, coming up to join us, and taking out a cigar.

"What a glorious evening!" exclaimed I, looking up.

"It is a fine night," returned Ireton, unconsciously modifying my remark.

"I shall go to bed," cried Berkeley, rudely. "Come along, Evelyn."

Now I instinctively felt that Ireton was not the sort of man with whom it was either prudent or proper to act rudely, and wishing to break the force of Harcourt's "cut direct," I said I preferred remaining out a little longer.

"Well then, I shall say good night. Look into my woom, Evelyn, before you turn in, however; I have something to say to you." With which speech Harcourt threw away his cigar, which, to say truth, did not always agree with him, and lounged sulkily towards the house.

"Your friend seems capricious, Mr. Evelyn," said Captain Ireton.

"Do you find him so?" answered I, dryly; for, though unwilling to commit a rudeness, I was not very anxious for a tête-à-tête with a man I did not know, and who, it was plain to perceive, had, from some reason or other, taken a dislike to me.

Captain Ireton smoked his cigar for some time in silence, and the pause became so awkward, that I said, at last, with a half affected shiver, "It is getting chilly, and I think I shall

follow Sir Harcourt; so, good evening, Captain Ireton."

"Will you allow me, Mr. Evelyn," returned the soldier, gravely, "to have a few minutes' conversation with you?"

"Certainly," said I, stiffly, and surprised to my fingers' ends.

Captain Ireton smiled slightly. "You may have observed this evening," he said, "that Lady Anne Stanley has hardly behaved to you with that cordiality that the old friendship, which she tells me exists between you, might warrant you to expect."

"Lady Anne Stanley is mistress of her own actions," I answered; "and I do not see what either you or I have to do with them."

"And have you no idea of the reason of this coldness?" he continued, without heeding my interruption, and going straight to his point as if he was storming a battery.

"None whatever," I answered; "and, however I may feel pained by it, I can accuse myself of nothing to merit it; but I can still less understand by what right you address me such a question."

"Simply at her request," replied the soldier.

"But surely she could speak to me herself?"

"She could," he answered, "but she *would* not, so I did. The truth is, Mr. Evelyn, I learn that Lord Winnington is your guardian, that you are a man of large fortune, and finally, that it is intended by her family that you and Lady Anne Stanley should some day be married."

"I know nothing whatever of any such intention," said I, "and your addressing me upon it is—"

"Stay, Mr. Evelyn," returned the soldier, "do not say any thing which I should be obliged to notice in a hostile manner. It is far from my intention to offend you. Enough that you know nothing of such an intention. It could never be realized, for the best possible reason, that Lady Anne Stanley is betrothed to me."

"Well," I answered, "Lady Anne was free to choose, and—and I am glad she has chosen worthily," I added, with an effort.

"Thank you, Sir," returned Captain Ireton, stretching out his hand, "and now I hope we shall be friends. There has been a little mis-

understanding, and Anne is self-willed,—I am glad I spoke so frankly."

"Are Lord and Lady Winnington aware of your intentions?" I asked.

"Not yet," returned the captain, with the only momentary hesitation I ever noticed in his manner; "but I shall of course take care to inform them. And to be frank," he added, smiling, "it was only half an hour ago that I was in a position to do so."

"And do you wish me to remain silent on this subject?" I asked.

"Till the arrival of Lord Winnington," returned the soldier.

CHAPTER XVII.

My mother pressed me sair, my father did na speak,
But he looked in my face as though his heart would break :
So they ga'ed him my hand, though my heart was on the sea,
And Auld Robin Grey was guid man to me.

EVERY trace of coldness had disappeared from Anne's manner the next morning, when she met me at breakfast. Her eyes had lost that rebellious and indignant look of the evening before, and we quite renewed our old alliance. Poor Anne! she felt quite relieved in having a confidant, and told me the little history of her love, and almost all that had happened to her of one kind and another since our last meeting, as I stood beside her, in what had once been her school-room, turning over the leaves of her music, and pretending to listen to

half a dozen antediluvian airs, which she sat absently thrumming upon a cracked and jaded old piano she used to practise on.

"And now, Wat," said she, when she had brought her story to an end, "how shall I behave?"

"I would speak to mamma at once," returned I, "if I were you."

The girl's face darkened. "Do you know, Walter, the said mamma has frightened me sometimes lately; I cannot understand her. I know she would like us to be married, that is, you and me; but why should she insist upon it so earnestly? Then she never seems to dream of any objection on my part; and you know, Wat, I have always looked upon you like a brother, and don't think I could have married you if I had tried."

"Very flattering," said I.

"Don't be so silly, now," laughed LadyAnne. "It is, perhaps, because you are such a dear good fellow, and we were always so happy together, that I never thought of you as a husband, and, do you know, I fancied it would be like taking you in."

"What on earth do you mean, Anne?" said I.

"Why—there—I don't know exactly what I mean; but you are so rich, and mamma tells me I have nothing at all, and that is why I was to have married you; which I cannot understand, Wat, and never could."

"And are you very fond of Captain Ireton?" asked I, to turn the subject.

"Yes I am, Wat," she answered, simply, "so fond of him, that I should never be happy again if we were to be separated; and he loves me too, Wat, though I am not worthy of him, and neither of us have ever loved any body before, or ever will again." She spoke so simply, and looked so truthful, as it was her fine frank nature to be, that it was impossible to doubt the truth of what she said, and I believed it then, as, unhappily, I believe it now.

"Be advised, dear Anne," said I; "it will be better to tell your mamma openly."

"But, Wat, dear Wat, mamma frightens me, she is so grave and sadly earnest when she speaks of you, and seems to have such a purpose in what she says about you. It was only just now, when she met me in the hall after breakfast, she called me to her, and kissing me on the forehead, said, 'I am very much pleased

with you, this morning, dear Annie; you will be very happy with him; a kinder hearted, better gentleman than Walter Evelyn never came into a drawing room.' Now, you know, I know that very well, dear Wat, but that is no reason why we should be married."

"And then," continued Lady Anne, after a moment's pause, "she saw in a moment I was not kind to you last night, for you know I was determined to have it out at once, and told Ralph to speak to you, for I could not bear to see you looking at me as if so hurt and surprised. Well, when I got up in my room, to go to bed, mamma came in, and she was very pale and trembled a little; 'Annie,' she said, 'I am come in to talk to you while you go to sleep. I do not feel disposed to go to bed myself.' So she sat down by my bed side and began playing with my hand very tenderly, and I felt that she was crying.

"Mamma, dear mamma," I asked, "what is the matter? it breaks my heart to see you so unhappy."

"It is nothing, my darling," she said; "the air is oppressive, I think, and my nerves are a

little unstrung; besides, you know, I am getting an old woman."

"My dear, beautiful mamma," said I, "I will not hear you talk so; for you know mamma is not at all old, is she now?"

"No," said I, and indeed it was the case; Time seemed to have dealt lightly indeed with the lovely face and form of the Countess of Winnington.

"Well, Wat," continued Anne, "I put my arms round her neck, and tried to soothe her, till she fairly laid her head down on my pillow, and we both cried together for perhaps half an hour. Dear mamma, said I, when she grew a little calmer, and as I spoke I tried to warm her hand, which was icy cold, do tell me what is the matter; has any thing happened to papa?"

"No, my love," she said, trying to smile, "no, that is, not now, but I fear long ago something happened, which makes me hope that you will try and love Walter Evelyn."

"Dear mamma," I answered, "but I always did love him, only I cannot, cannot marry him.

It is quite a different feeling I have for Walter."

"Why will you not try to change your opinion of him?" answered mamma, "promise me you will, love; it would make me so happy."

"Dear mamma, I began, and I was just going to tell her about Ralph at once, when she stopped me. 'We will not talk any more about it to night, Annie,' said she, 'but I am sure Walter would make you very, very happy, and you must promise me, at least, not to treat him so coldly and unkindly. I saw he looked quite unhappy about it all the evening;' and then she kissed me and bade me good night. And now, dear Wat, you know all about it. I ought not to have told you; but I have no one else to confide in," added the young girl sadly, "and no one to give me any advice."

"I confess to you," I answered, "that I do not understand it all any better than you do, Anne. Perhaps mamma judges too kindly of me, and, not knowing of your feelings towards Captain Ireton, wishes to see you happy and settled. That must be all; and in any case tell her, Anne, tell her frankly, what you have told me."

Our conversation was here broken off by the entrance of Captain Ireton, who advanced towards me with great cordiality, and in his usual way came to what he had to say with military brevity.

"I am glad to be able to release you from your promise of secrecy about Anne and me," said he, "for I hate secrecy myself, and I believe it to be irksome to the feelings of any gentleman."

"Is my Lord arrived, then?" asked I, with a sort of presentiment that something unpleasant was to follow, which pained me while looking at the frank open face of the soldier.

"Not come," replied Captain Ireton, "but coming. A courier has just arrived to say he will be here at three o'clock this afternoon." (Lord Winnington could not even return to his own house like a common man, but must have couriers and telegraphs and all manners of fuss to announce his arrival.) "I need scarcely add," continued the Captain, "that I shall speak to him at once, and that I hold you absolved from your promise of last night."

Anne looked at him so admiringly, with all her girlish loving heart beaming from her eyes.

Their affection seemed such a very simple, earnest affair, so unlike the sickly dream of too much youth and reading, which usually haunts the heads of silly cornets and sweet seventeen, that I wished him success with all my heart. I was not at that time, in spite of my precocity and French experience, either old enough or wise enough to think much of their worldly prospects, the absolute ease of which always forms a very large ingredient in the permanent happiness of married life. But at this distance of time, even looking back on that young, hopeful pair, I do not see why his suit should not have prospered, and their marriage have been followed by as much content as can ever be hoped for in life. He was young, and on the highway to the great fame and fortunes he afterwards attained. He was a captain attached to the staff of a general in India, and his pay and allowances could have been little short of a thousand a year, with every prospect of speedy increase. His orderly, soldierly habits, too, had enabled him already to save some money; quite enough to have paid their passage out and established them as befits the household of a man who marries a peer's daughter,

for whom quarters in barracks and a soldier servant will never do. Then Lady Anne herself had the usual fortune of a daughter of a noble house secured to her under her mother's settlement; some five or ten thousand pounds, I do not remember which. Upon the whole, therefore, few young people could have had a better prospect of worldly happiness, if not positively mad about operas and race-horses, routs, and milliners' bills; if they had good sense enough to be able to breathe pure air elsewhere than in Grosvenoria, and believed at all in the touching proverb which speaks of the "feast where love is."

Few girls either were better fitted to be a soldier's wife than Anne Stanley, who would positively have enjoyed the roughing and adventure of it, and few were more totally unfit for the maudlin nonsense of what is called fashionable life, as if in contradistinction to reasonable life. A fine young woman, all high health and elastic spirits, with no nonsense or affectation about her, she seemed made to be the mother of heroes, and to gird on her husband's sword when he went forth to battle. She would have been the very Providence of

an Indian soldier's home, and would have become as famous in a severe campaign as Lady Sale or the Maid of Saragossa. All energy, youth, and good humour, she would have been the life of the insipid society of India, idolized by her husband's comrades, toasted at every mess table, and remembered kindly by every common soldier upon his night watch for some act of womanly goodness; and she would have been happy sharing in her husband's successes, wearing his laurels and rendering them worth winning to him. Alas! it is very seldom indeed that those who seem most fortunate in life are among the happy. And certainly one who afterwards became the greatest soldier who ever drew his sword on the plains of India, and who, before middle life, became the pride of his country, was little to be envied by the poorest cadet, for the chill of loneliness and disappointed affection was at his heart for evermore.

We thought it best to leave Captain Ireton alone, to have his interview with Lord Winnington, that, being the only guest left at home, it might come about more naturally; and so, much to the satisfaction of the Countess (my

heart smote me when I saw her smile), it was arranged that Anne, Mr. Sinclair, and I, should go for a ride together to visit a ruin in the neighbourhood, which had interested the poet from a description of it he had read in some local history. I shall never forget that ride, which was the last I ever took at Cleveland park. It was a lovely afternoon. The summer seemed to be taking leave of us with a smile, but "the breath of Winter came from far away," and a pleasant northerly breeze rustled about the elms, and the rich, ripening corn lay upon the land, looking like fairy gold, which had life in it, as the long yellow ears danced in the sunshine, and the loud grasshopper went springing from stalk to stalk.

The poet was in his glory, for he liked us both, and felt at his ease with us. How delightfully he talked! what fine old legends of the county families he told us as we rode by the noble country houses which are the peculiar and most striking feature of an English landscape! Then he knew all the local traditions and bygone customs of the simple country folk, and was as learned and amusing as a page of Strutt or Stow. His language was so

well chosen, so suited to his theme, he lighted up so as he talked, and his plain countenance grew so handsome in its noble expression of intellect and high thought as he warmed with the fire of his own genius, that one could hardly fancy him the same Arthur Sinclair who came shuffling into a drawing-room, looking all ways at once, and piteously shifting about his awkward hands, as if not knowing how to get rid of them.

I could see that Anne was very much excited, as it was natural that she should be, and I was glad the poet kept talking on, for we were both in a humour that made excellent listeners.

We prolonged our ride, therefore, rather more than was necessary, for none of us cared to return, the poet being fascinated with his subject, and busy wandering in dreamland, while Anne was growing sick with anxiety, yet feared to clear up her doubts. For my part, I could have enjoyed that lovely summer day, and listened to the spell of the gifted poet's words till now, and I had a kind of foreknowledge that poor Annie was going home to cold news. At length, however, the wise little clock

of a village church striking the hour in quite a remonstrative sort of way, warned us home, and putting our horses into a canter, we heard the clanging summons of the first dinner-bell as we passed the lodge gates. Poor Annie, I think I see her now, the rosy colour of her cheeks had faded to an ashy paleness, her eye burnt with a feverish fire, and her lips were slightly parted to admit the breath which came quicker and quicker.

A postchaise stood before the door ready packed, and with the boys mounted; and a quick spasm passed over Anne's face as her keen eye had read long before mine the name painted in large white letters upon the trunks which were fastened behind. It was that of "Captain R. Ireton, —th regiment;" and the next moment she fell fainting from her horse.

We were down and at her side in a moment, and as Arthur Sinclair stood beside her, and I, sunk on one knee, supported her head, while the hue of death was upon her face, and her long hair fell in wild disarray about her shoulders, the postchaise drove by us.

It contained but one traveller, a young man in an undress military uniform, and he never

held up his head as he passed. He sat with folded arms, like a man of iron, looking straight forward, but seeing, feeling nothing; and the face of the soldier was terribly stern.

"Ah!" said the poet, who I fancied had not even guessed at what had been passing during his stay at Cleveland, "ah! I thought so, and I have been trying to keep up her spirits all the afternoon, though I saw it was of little use. Thus end the dreams of young hearts. Why, why is life so sad?"

It was a joyless dinner that day at Cleveland, though the master of the feast presided for the first time for long months at his own table. Lady Winnington kept her room, and the arrival of a physician from the county town, and the hushed steps of the servants about the house, seemed to announce that Lady Anne must be very ill indeed. Yet there sat that debauched man over his wine, long after dinner, relating obscene stories, culled from the side-scenes of the opera, and glorying in the sins of his youth. Not one sigh for his wife, who sat wringing her hands over his broken-hearted daughter, passed his lips, bloated and livid with excess. A profound expression of

disgust shadowed the face of Arthur Sinclair as he announced his departure for the following day, and gave a cold ear to his host; and what I felt is so mixed up and mingled with the greater contempt and abhorrence I had for my guardian afterwards, that I do not trust myself to dwell upon it now.

Strange to say, Lord Winnington seemed anxious, however, to get rid of me, and treated me with marked rudeness; and, although I knew there was but scant liking between us, I felt rather surprised at this after Lady Anne's confidence of the preceding day. I had little wish, though, to stay, and determined to take my departure on the following morning, and share the postchaise of Mr. Sinclair, who was also going on a visit to General Howard.

In the night, I remember there was a great commotion and hurrying to and fro of footsteps. Cleveland was a sad house next morning, for the Earl had been seized in the night by a stroke of apoplexy, brought on by excesses, and, when dear Lady Winnington appeared to take leave of us, she looked ten years older than on the previous morning. I would willingly have remained if I could have been

any comfort to her, but she also seemed relieved by my going away; so, taking an affectionate farewell of her, and exchanging a warm grasp of the hand with Sir Harcourt Berkeley, who stayed behind, the poet and I were soon upon the road.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I'd be thy true lover, dearest,
Could'st thou smile on me.

A PLAIN English gentleman's country house —there is positive music in the words; and such was The Lodge where the Howards lived. Passing Marsden Court, the gloomy deserted pile which belonged to me, we hastened onwards, and, just as the afternoon shadows were lengthening into those fantastic shapes which seem to make sport for the sunshine, we stopped at the low porch of the kind-hearted General's comfortable house.

"Well, gentlemen, Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Walter, glad to see you in my humble dwelling. I dare say we shall be able to find some place

to put you, though my brother and his son are here. But why did you not come sooner, we have had dinner these two hours."

This was rather a blank announcement for travellers till the General continued:—

"Mary (that's my wife as you know) have something got ready for tea. I dare say Mr. Sinclair and young Walter here are hungry. They have had a long drive." (Then turning to us) "How did you leave those grand folks at Cleveland?"

We told our cold news as briefly as possible, and the kind old soldier, who had not a single squeeze of lemon in his whole nature, looked touched.

"I am sorry for poor Lady Winnington and Anne, who is a good girl, a very good girl, and, though my Lord is no friend of mine, for he once tried to do me a great injury, and, I believe, behaved ill to my brother, it is a sad thing his being taken ill too at such a time. By the way, Captain Ireton, of the —th, who was one of your party, has just written to refuse an appointment I had offered him on my staff if I go out to Malta, as I suppose I shall, and he tells me he is going back to India

again immediately. He is a fine soldier, and will do well there."

We felt little inclination to prolong the conversation, for I felt that as matters had turned out it would be indelicate to betray the confidence the lovers had reposed in me, and Sinclair, of course, had no right to allude to facts which, after all, were only conjectured by him; so we changed the subject by asking after Emily.

"My daughter is very well, very well, thank you, Walter," said General Howard with a sly look at Mr. Sinclair, that told me I was marked out as special game during my visit to the Lodge; "she is gone for a walk with her uncle and my nephew William, who has taken it into his head that he would like to go into the Austrian service."

"The Austrian service!" quoth Mr. Sinclair, "that is a bad business."

"I don't know," answered the General; "it is a fine service, too. They turn out very good soldiers; I believe Englishmen are very well looked upon, too, and tolerably certain of promotion if they behave well. I have one or two relations in it who have got on capitally."

Mr. Sinclair shook his head. "I thought my godson William was going into the Church," said he, "and I had some ideas of my own about him."

"Were you going to give him your living?" asked the General bluntly. "Well I must speak to his father about that, and, to tell you the truth, my brother would rather William would do any thing else. But he is a headstrong lad, as I was, myself, at his age. Here they are, however, coming across the lawn, I see, so you can talk to them yourself."

William Howard, who entered a moment after with his father and Emily, was a fine, tall, fair young man, whose countenance and bearing would have stamped him as an Englishman all the world over. It was the countenance, however, of an Englishman of the higher order, and not of the ruddy-faced lad with flaxen hair and laughing eyes, who is generally supposed most likely to be captivated with the pomp and circumstance of a military life. He had rather the air of some Highland chief, bold, adventurous, and ambitious, but with a wild poetry of feeling, and intellect of a rare order. In middle life he was, perhaps,

destined to ripen into a famous soldier, and a glance would tell you that, whatever career he might choose, he was not likely to remain long in a subordinate post in it. But, at present, there was something which augured ill for the commencement of his fortunes. There was an unsettled look about him, a want of steadiness in every thing he did or said, which might have made a Scotchman think he had a bee in his bonnet. His ideas were hopelessly wrong on most subjects, but he had a way of defending his opinions with an acuteness and power of reasoning, which startled common people, and, though they knew he was not right, they were silenced in no time. He had a habit I have often remarked in young men of superior intellect, who have not yet learned the necessity of respecting the world's opinion — it was that of setting himself totally above all the usual considerations which influence ordinary people, and talking of himself as if he were a third person, and the representative of some mere abstract idea. His mind had too many sides to it, and he could never bring himself to decide firmly upon any subject because his acute hair-splitting habit of reason-

ing told him how much was to be said on both sides. Then his imagination was stronger than usually coincides with absolute mental health. He idealized everything. Like the Practical Man in the farce, he always jumped high and wide over means, and saw nothing but ends. When any proposition was made to him, he seized its advantages at once, and exaggerated them after his own manner. He saw not what would be in life, but what might be.

"Suppose a man enters the army at seventeen," he would say,—"that's just my age, though I leave myself out of the question,—well, with anything like luck or active service he is a captain at two-and-twenty, or say twenty-five, a major at thirty, and then he goes by seniority, and may reasonably hope to die a general, grand cross, &c.; while, if he enters the Church, there he is—a fixture for life, a curate on fifty pounds a year for ever; or, if he is lucky, he may get a hundred, and there is an end of him."

Supposing, however, he was in the humour to take a different view of the question, he would assure you gravely that some celebrated

person whom he had read of had become a bishop at twenty-two, and that there was once a Pope of Rome a minor; but, he would add, with an air of candour that used to make his father and Mr. Sinclair smile, though it carried absolute conviction to the mind of the General, "But take more modern instances, there is the Bishop of W—— and even the Archbishop of B——, they had no interest, nothing but their own talents; yet see, the one, not yet forty, has become one of the great lights of the Church, and the other promises some day to eclipse him."

So he would go on. At the Bar he invariably saw himself Lord Chancellor, and in literature Sir Walter Scott, and it thus became an uncertain question what course of life he would eventually adopt. He would have made an excellent soldier but for an indomitable hankering after literature, and he might, perhaps, some day have rivalled even his great model, Sir Walter, if any object could ever have kept him to one subject for a whole hour, or persuaded him to adopt a consecutive course of reading. For the Church or the Bar, however, he was totally unfitted, having neither

the steadiness and self-denial required by the one, or the application and obstinate study necessary to succeed in the other.

To mere acquaintances William Howard appeared a kind of Admirable Crichton, and there seemed nothing above or beneath his ability. His art of making everything he read his own, and his having read a page or two of every book he had ever seen, made him appear surprisingly informed upon an astonishing variety of subjects; and while you were wondering how in the world a lad of his age had become acquainted with some dry argument of a Saxon chronicler or witty aphorism of a French moralist, he would startle you by turning a kind of mental summerset, and giving you a criticism on a modern novel that might have come from the pen of A—— himself, and probably did, for Master William's favourite reading was reviews; they suited the natural impatience of his mind for final results, and what he read he remembered. Then he was a bold and clever horseman, riding up to hounds straight as the crow flies, an enthusiastic sportsman, perfect in everything, from drawing a badger to tickling a trout, and was equally at

home in a conversation with Mr. Sinclair or Will Smith, the gamekeeper.

Emily did not quite like him, or rather he was always offending her, making wild love to her one minute, and uttering wilder sarcasms on all love the next; then he was a little bit of a buffoon, his wit ran on too fast and extreme in everything, he was always slashing about right and left with his remarks, and struck sometimes very hard in the wrong place. Yet it was hardly possible to help liking him, he was the most affectionate and obliging fellow that ever did silly things. He would have walked a score of miles in rough weather to do any one a service, or even to please them, and he was the most graceful rememberer of birth-days and the little holidays of life I have ever known. Vain himself, he was fond of pleasing the vanity of others, and would serenade Emily with his fine rich voice, and in verses of his own, glowing with tenderness enough to set fire to the hearts of all the boarding-schools in Highgate; and he had a pitched battle with the gardener of a testy old West Indian settled in the neighbourhood, because he would jump over his wall to gather a pretty kind of wild

flower which grew near it for Emily, who had a little bunch of them laid before her at breakfast as surely as the morning came round.

We got on very well altogether, and made one of the pleasantest country parties possible. We would go out in the morning, while the General was reading his newspapers or arranging the many preparations for his departure to his new command, which was to take place in the autumn, and sit down under the shadow of some glorious old English oak-tree, and live away the whole morning in cloud-land. It might have been a pretty picture to see Emily and me seated on the short velvet grass, she with her work-basket, and I watching the rapid motions of her white little fingers from under the shadow of an enormous straw hat. Above us sat Mr. Sinclair on a camp-stool, and leaning on a stout stick, with a pleased, thoughtful look which made you better to feel was watching you; and beside us was William, supporting himself gracefully against a tree, and reading from some book, the very king of his company.

I do not know how it was that about this

time a coldness grew up between Emily and me. She never seemed quite at her ease when we were alone, and, if it ever chanced by accident, she always took some opportunity of leaving me. Then she seldom spoke to me, and when she did it was with a kind of reserve foreign to her character, while she would talk and laugh with Mr. Sinclair, or even William, for hours, the very soul of cheerful good humour and innocent gaiety. I thought too I perceived a growing affection between her and the poet; and, though if any one had hinted such a thing to me a month previously as probable I should have laughed the idea to scorn, I had since seen too much of his gentle winning manners, and the rich stores of his mind, to doubt that even a young girl like Emily might love him very dearly. With a bitter sigh enough, therefore, I resigned myself to the belief that she actually did so. Indeed she never seemed happy away from him, and was always at work to make him some playful little present, which he used to receive with great delight; and at last, from his pretty little silk watch-chain to his wrist-mittens for the coming winter and the initials on his large

yellow silk pocket-handkerchiefs, he was made quite a dandy by her handiwork. This, indeed, soon grew into a species of barter; for Arthur Sinclair was enormously rich, and scarcely a mail arrived without bringing some pretty ornament for Emily, of which she could not even have guessed the cost; and at last she even asked for his picture: and I never knew how handsome the poet was till a beautiful miniature, taken some years previously by Chalon, arrived from his place in Scotland, and he handed it to her, much affected, one morning, as we took our old places under the oak tree.

"It was done for my poor mother," said he, with a slight tremor in his voice; "and I would not have given it to any one in the world besides."

"I shall be very proud of it," answered Emily, with tears in her eyes, "and will wear it always round my neck."

"Nay," answered the poet, gracefully, "I have not condemned you to that, Emily, for here is a new setting I have had made for it, so as to make a bracelet, a brooch, or a sash-buckle for you; and, what is better, I shall be hidden, and you need not show me unless you

like. See, this false back makes a pretty enamel."

"I will never wear it so," said Emily.

"Dear Emily," said I, unable to bear this conversation, "I have been thinking of going abroad again. My mother writes to me to return to Paris; and then—then I think I shall travel, for some years perhaps."

"You will do well," said Mr. Sinclair; "all young men destined to play a great part in life, as I trust you are, should see and understand foreign countries before they settle down in their own. It removes all sorts of narrow-minded prejudices."

Emily did not answer me at first; and, though it might have been fancy, I thought she grew strangely paler. After a short pause she said, however, "We shall be sorry to lose you, Walter."

The poet smiled—a smile I did not understand; for my heart was blind with sorrow, and a kind of cloud was over me. "I am thinking too of going abroad ere long," said he; "and, as the General and I have been laying our heads together, and getting up a very pretty little plan in which Emily is to play a great

part, who knows but what we may all meet again on the great wall of China?"

"Well, I hope you won't forget me in going through Hungary!" exclaimed William; "I hear all the Austrian cavalry regiments nearly are quartered in Hungary. Perhaps I shall be a captain, too, by that time, and will have the band to play under your windows, after the manner of the Germans."

"So, then, you have not given up your plan, Will?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

"Given it up! I should think not, indeed. It is much better to be a count and a general in the Austrian service than to finish as a half-pay captain in ours. Besides, I cannot get even a commission; and if I could my father cannot give me enough to live on in our cavalry, and I hate infantry. The French say an infantry officer always gives you omelette and rum for dinner."

"But, by the way, Will, you will want an allowance in the Austrian service; a cadet does not get more than eight pounds a year."

"Oh, yes, a cadet, I know, doesn't; but of course I shan't be a cadet more than a week or two; perhaps not at all; and the allowance

wanted by an officer is only sixty pounds a year, with about fifty pounds for an outfit."

"I believe, Will," said Mr. Sinclair, gravely, "you will find things there rather different to what you think them. I am told that young men who have not had an education at one of the regular Austrian military schools often remain cadets for ten or twelve years; and that those who by some back-stairs influence are made officers at once do not turn out such good soldiers as those who work their way."

"Oh, no, of course not; and I am perfectly willing to work my way," returned the lad; "but then there is so much humbug in all professions that what one has to learn is really very little."

"A bad principle to work on, Will," retorted Mr. Sinclair. "There are indeed a good many forms in all professions, which those who do not understand them are apt to call humbug; but I would have you be cautious in viewing them in that light. These forms are very useful things. Try to learn any profession you take to as it is understood by the men who have been most eminent in it. But I still hope we

shall persuade you to give up the Austrian scheme."

"Why, sir," answered the youth, "would you have me dream away my life in idleness here when I may win distinction and high name far away? In England every career is choked up."

"Stay, Will, not so much as in Austria, believe me," interrupted Mr. Sinclair; "besides, what is the fame you are running after, even if most successful—a name in a foreign service, an unconsidered title, and a few bits of ribbon, in exchange for liberty and the name of Englishman."

"It is," answered William Howard, with a restless and kindling eye, "the fame which men have envied and ladies smiled on since the world began, and the blood now burning in my veins is that which has ever kindled the hearts of heroes. What I seek is something out of the dull routine of ordinary life; the companionship of the brave and adventurous; a wedding with the saddle and the sword, with all the world has yet left of romance and chivalry. Besides, an Austrian officer in Hun-

gary is a great man; though poor, his wants are few, and he has enough to supply them; though but a subaltern, he is the companion of princes and nobles, and welcome in every hall and bower throughout the land. Here, I am nothing."

"You defend your choice eloquently, but you do not convince me, Will," said Mr. Sinclair. "Think again about it. A mercenary soldier in the ranks of a foreign sovereign, who may some day stand in arms against his native land, is, to my thinking, no hero."

"I would never fight against England," said William Howard.

"Then you might have to give up your career when it promised best; though I hear that generously and wisely in the numerous nations that give their quota to the Austrian army, troops are never sent in arms against their own native land."

"As for being mercenary," said the young man, "I would give up all prospect of pay; I ask for the renown of the soldier, not his spoil."

"You can take the one with the other,

without shame," replied Mr. Sinclair. "Few have a better title to their scanty allowances than soldiers; and the reward of hard service stains no man's hand."

"Then, after all, you acknowledge my choice to be at least a noble one, worthy of a gentleman and a Howard?"

"There is certainly no disgrace in it," returned the poet; "it is simply wild and imprudent. You will regret it sadly enough at my age, and with your abilities."

"Now that is just what I think I shall not," returned the youth. "To wear my life away as I should be obliged to do in England, and to grow into an old man who has done nothing, would make an idiot of me. The very thought sends a chill over me."

"You would never do that," said Mr. Sinclair, looking kindly at the impetuous and high-couraged youth before him.

"I never will do it, sir," answered he; "and so I am going into the Austrian service, where my own right arm, and a stout heart, may win for me—

> High place in royal court,
> High place in battled line."

"And," replied the poet, continuing the quotation with a doubting smile,—

> "Where beauty sees the brave resort,
> The honoured meed be thine."

"Well! well! we shall see."

CHAPTER XIX.

"Souffrir est le partage de la vie."
MADAME DE GENLIS.

I RENEWED my boyish friendship with Maurice Howard, who was almost constantly with his brother during the time of our visit; and now I had grown old enough to understand him better than I did in my childish days my respectful and admiring affection for him became every day stronger and stronger. It was plain to me that he was unhappy, though I could not divine why or how,—for it seemed to my unthinking and boyish mind, so little accustomed to consider the designs of Pro-

vidence, that one who did so much good, and whose life was like a lesson to mankind, in the moderation of wishes, and the practice of all virtue, should, while blessing others, have been also blessed. But some have their reward in one way, and some in another; and there are those who are tried to the last, and whose reward is not here.

Time had not dealt harshly with the recluse, however, though his hair had grown grayer, and his stoop more confirmed. There was no discontent, none of the sternness of misery, visible on that subdued, pensive face; and it was plain that, whatever might be the secret sorrow that lay deep in his heart, its pain was subdued by the peace which passeth all understanding, and which kept it evermore.

He did not like his son's leaving him, and he, perhaps, liked his errand still less; but he appeared to have made up his mind to it: so that, when Mr. Sinclair spoke to him seriously to endeavour to dissuade William from his wild idea, and mentioned it simply as the fancy of a lad captivated by the thoughts of a uniform; when he kindly promised to give him one of the best livings in England, and even

to bear the expense of his education up at the university (for the Howards and St. Clairs were near kinsmen), the scholar smiled sadly, but said, "From his own experience, he feared no Howard ought to choose any other life than a soldier's."

"But you," answered Mr. Sinclair, "surely you, my dear Maurice, would scarcely have done for the rough life of camps, and the vulgar pleasure of a mere grenadier; and, though I know you were in the army for a little while, agree with me that you retired in something very like disgust from a profession so little congenial to your tastes and habits."

The sad smile returned, rare as it was, and Maurice Howard answered, "I retired, indeed; but perhaps it would have been better if I had not. Trust me, Arthur, the Howards were made for soldiers; 'tis our vocation, Hal."

Everything he did was characterised by the same utter disregard of himself. He had schooled himself into that state of feeling, which never thinks if a thing is agreeable, but only if it ought to be, or is to be, and then accepts it, come what will, without a murmur.

I grew gradually very much into his con-

fidence, for, fancying Emily had taken a dislike to me, I spent more time at the scholar's cottage than at the Lodge; and we used to take long rambles together in the summer evenings. I was often surprised to notice his clear knowledge of men and things on these occasions, and how well he understood the world he had quitted so long.

"Your uncle was quite right," he said to me one day, "when he told you that you will do well to enter the House of Commons early. The sooner you get familiarized with the routine of business the better; but do not be carried away by the vanity of making a brilliant maiden speech, or, ten chances to one, you will fail. Above all, too, speak absolutely, never without fully understanding your subject, and without having well considered what you are going to say; for it is much easier to create a reputation, than to regain a lost one."

"I am afraid," answered I, "my talent does not lie in oratory; and I shall never make a good speaker. Once, when I wished to say something after a dinner, on my birthday, my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, and not a word would come."

"Don't be discouraged by that," replied the scholar; "few young men speak even tolerably, and nothing requires such long and frequent practice, and such careful study, as good oratory. Take every opportunity, however, that presents itself to you of addressing an audience; and then, when you have got over your embarrassment, as you soon will, the words will come easily enough; the only fear is of having too many, and smothering your meaning in them. Another thing I would strongly advise you," continued he, "is, not to be led away by friendships or family connections to join any distinct party in politics, and so lose your freedom of action. All men who adhere fixedly to one set of ideas must sometimes be wrong; and you will not be for many years capable of forming opinions that you may like to advocate in after-life. A man who belongs to a party, also, is sure to acquire narrow notions and class prejudices, or, if he does not, will find himself sometimes forced, by our odd code of political consistency, to act with his friends when his judgment tells him they are in the wrong, while a perfectly independent Member of the House of Commons has a noble part in life, if

he understands it well. Beware, however, of rushing into action, or taking up any particular class of grievances, and never let the enthusiasm of your leader or followers carry you farther in any direction than you wish to go."

"Shall I keep Marsden Court," said I, "when I come of age? It is terribly dilapidated, a miserable place, and I have no affection for it.

"Yet keep it," answered the scholar. "If you mean to enter public life you will find that, being a landed proprietor, and having a good estate, will add a great deal to your influence, and even to your utility; but contrive, if you can, not to be wholly dependent on your land for your income. If you asked me as a mere idler, I might answer you differently; then, money is better than land. Do not, however, keep your estate one day longer than you can do justice to all who live on it, for you would be guilty of a great evil."

"I am wholly ignorant of what I shall have," said I; "my guardian has never spoken to me about it."

"You will be very rich—very rich," returned

the scholar, musingly; "Lord Walter Evelyn must have left a great fortune; he died just after one of our most important conquests in India, and, as he had already attained a high rank in the service, and had a separate command, his share of prize-money was immense. Poor Helen Lascelles! the news of his intended return home, and of his death, reached her by the same mail. I believe I first took so strong an interest in you for his sake, Walter, though I learned only lately, and by accident, through Lord Staunton, that I owed my first commission to his interest at the Horse Guards. He was one of the most simple and pure-hearted men I remember, in a time when I knew many."

"I wonder how it was," said I, recurring to a thought that was constantly growing stronger, as I knew my guardian better, "that my uncle Walter and Lord Winnington ever became intimate with each other? I should have thought anything like friendship between two such men was impossible. Or am I wrong? is Lord Winnington, after all, only like the rest of the world, and are my uncle and you, and some others, the bright and rare exceptions?"

The scholar's face moved painfully; he

stopped for a moment, and pressed his hand tightly over his brows.

"Are you unwell?" said I; "for Heaven's sake, lean upon me, or let us rest a little."

"No," said he, recovering himself by a visible effort, and his face resumed its calm, sad expression. "No, I am quite well again, it was only a slight spasm; but I had forgotten that Lord Winnington was your guardian."

"Yes," said I; "he has the absolute control of everything I am to have, and I shall be glad when his rule is over, for I have a dislike to him, of which I cannot get the better. Am I unjust? tell me, if you know him well, and I will try to conquer it."

"I cannot judge Lord Winnington," answered the recluse; and I saw that he was still very pale.

"You will not judge him," said I, "because he once behaved ill to you. The General was saying so the other day."

"Saying so? saying what? what did my brother say?" asked the recluse, violently agitated.

"Simply, that he had heard Lord Winnington had behaved ill to you."

"Was that all?" returned Mr. Howard, obviously relieved.

"Yes, all," answered I; "although I am quite sure, if there was any dispute between you and him he must have been in the wrong, and not you; for I am as sure he is a bad man as I know you are a good one. Was it anything serious?" I continued, unconscious of the wound I was probing.

"Walter!" replied the recluse, in an agitated voice, "spare, spare me;" and again he pressed his hand upon his forehead, and I saw the large drops of agony gather upon it.

"Forgive me," said I, "my dear Mr. Howard! I would not have distressed you for the world if I had known that there was anything wrong or indelicate in my question;" and I thought, while looking upon the terrible anguish of the good man, of a sentence I had lately read somewhere, "That few men know all the ill they do." It was evident that the distress of the recluse was occasioned by some event in which Lord Winnington must have been concerned years and years ago; and, remembering the story I had heard of an unpleasant affair with a young nobleman at Oxford, I imme-

diately divined that Lord Winnington must have been the man who had thus shadowed Maurice Howard's whole life; and when I reflected how I had last seen my guardian, so full of the world's honour—so loaded with the good things of life, and then looked at the scholar, whose shoes he was not worthy to untie—thus bowed down with some sorrow inflicted by him—I felt inexpressibly touched with the contrast.

I think it was about this time that I learned the sad truth (partly from the confidence which had grown up between us, and partly from other circumstances), and the heavy load that the patient scholar bore over his heart so nobly and so uncom plainingly; but it was not till year afterwards that I understood how perfect must that Christian charity have been which forbore to speak evil of one who had wasted the hopes of a whole life, and scattered its love and ambition to the winds. But as, in the course of my story, I may not have another place to tell the reader what I then learned, let me try to do so now.

CHAPTER XX.

" 'Tis sad, 'tis sad to number o'er
The faces glad and gay
That we have known ; some smile no more
Around us, as they did of yore,
And some have turned away."

THERE was a brilliant dinner-table in Edinburgh, and the lawyers and the statesmen of the land were gathered round it. The rising talent of Brougham may have enlivened it, and Jeffrey's light wit, and Scott's fund of anecdotes and rich fancy. These, and many more, were making what is certainly the most beautiful town in the world a modern Athens indeed—the very centre of wit, hospitality, and the highest order of intellectual society. Among the guests, however, was a young officer in a marching regiment, who was just

married, yet who possessed nothing but his sword, and the prestige of a name that had been distinguished in the military annals of many generations, to push his fortunes. Though bearing an English name, which had been taken by the branch of the family to which he belonged on their accession to some English estates, he was both by birth and descent a Scotchman—of the bold line of the old Macgregors. I need scarcely add that it was him whom the reader knows as Maurice Howard; and little did he think that that evening was to decide the whole fortunes of his after-life.

The Scotchmen of a former generation were extremely fond of literary discussion, and I do not think they have lost much of their old habit in our own. During dinner, therefore, a discussion arose on the right construction to be put upon a passage in Aristophanes which had been used by one of them in a review; and the opinions of those at table, every one of whom was a scholar of high attainments, were almost equally divided between two opposite readings, each conveying a different sense. Here was one of those opportunities by which a man's fame is sometimes fixed for a lifetime;

and the young soldier had the final honour of settling the question, illustrating and supporting his opinion so modestly, yet so clearly, as to put an end to all doubt upon the point. It rather astonished the scholars, men who had spent their lives in libraries and in poring over books with a diligence to which none but Scotchmen and Germans are equal, to be thus set right by an officer in the army—a class of men who at that time, brave and able as they have always proved in the field, were often painfully at a loss on subjects unconnected with their profession. Many of them, therefore, subsequently paid great attention to the young soldier; and, as in Scotland the profession of arms has always yielded precedence to the robe in public estimation, there were not wanting kind and zealous friends to urge him to abandon the army for the bar; and happy would it have been for Maurice Howard if their advice had prevailed. He had fallen, however, into a state of mind common enough among young Scotchmen, and fancied he had a call for the Church; his opinions being probably strengthened in that direction by the pious and excellent lady whom he had married. She was

an Englishwoman, however, and her religious tenets not being those of the Presbyterian Church, combined with the fact that the Howard family possessed the patronage of several valuable livings, induced Maurice, after a short hesitation, to dispose of his commission and enter himself as a Gentleman Commoner at one of the Halls at the University of Oxford.

Here he speedily distinguished himself, as he would have done anywhere, and prize after prize rewarded his obstinate and well-directed studies. Had he been unmarried he would certainly have obtained a fellowship; as it was, he was sure of those high University honours and subsequent preferment in the Church, which never fail a man of high attainments who has graduated at either of our noble Universities.

The position of an undergraduate, with a wife and family, though not altogether unknown, is uncommon; for men are too apt to look on marriage as the grave of hope, and, sinking with many bitter repinings into slippers and an easy chair, cease from struggling for place and power in the world, if they have not already attained it. Mrs. Howard however was

fortunately a woman of an ambitious and somewhat masculine mind, and instead of complaining of the sacrifice of her dignity, and worrying her husband over his lexicons and Euclid with the petty details of household affairs, she stimulated him with the noblest affection and self-devotion in the race that he was running. She never repined at the almost total loss of society to which an undergraduate's wife is condemned by the families of dons over-jealous of their dignity; and her heart was satisfied and happy in the rich affection of her husband, who loved her as men of rare intellects and gentle hearts always do love their wives. She went about her daily duties cheerful and contented therefore; instructed her children, to save the expense of their schooling; ordered dinner and made tea in such peace and good order, that Maurice Howard's home became a little paradise; and, withdrawing him altogether from the society of the other students, he became unquestionably the first man of his year; for where others worked two or three hours a-day, amid the fumes of tobacco and the harassing of duns, he read gaily for sixteen at his open window, cheered by the breath of flowers and

the sound of loving voices, and he kept no long vacation.

Suddenly, however, very suddenly, the machine gave way. A slight pain at the heart, arising probably from some slight indigestion or working too soon after dinner, was the first symptom, and (as all men of strong minds are too apt to do) he paid no attention to it till his illness increased so dangerously, as to force him reluctantly to summons a doctor, and lay up. Had he taken remedies only a few days sooner he might have got quit for a little more exercise, a ride in the morning and a walk in the afternoon, with a journey to London, and a visit to the theatres; but he had gone on hoping to get better every day, and despising the many warnings of nature, till the machine came to a dead stop, and masters and tutors heard with dismay that the great scholar and kindly gentleman, Maurice Howard, whom they looked upon as about to confer the distinction of a double-first on their hall, lay delirious, raving about Greek roots and logical demonstrations.

Fortunately, however, this did not last long; the bow was strained, not broken; and after a few days Maurice Howard might be seen seated

with his wife and children, listening to her while she played and sang little simple airs to him, and to the boisterous prattle of the youngsters, as they sprawled over his knees and invalid chair. This was succeeded by a few attendances on the part of the local artist in hair; and then his wife, half laughing, and half crying, while her very heart was overflowing with love and pride, was enabled to watch him as he mounted a hired hack, and cantered off to Bullington or Woodstock in search of his lost health. The doctor, however, obstinately forbade any renewal of the intimacy between the scholar and his books for some weeks. The very children ceased prattling Latin (how they catch our ways!), and the names of Homer and Euripides were no longer heard among the simple family. After a few weeks of this perfect cessation from study, the doctor, who had been called in, seeing that Howard was beginning to fret over his inactivity, allowed him to resume his studies, but concluded his permission with a very sensible caution.

"If," said he, "you persist in working too hard, in spite of this warning, your health will

certainly break down again; and you will be condemned to Italy and nursing for the rest of your life. Limit yourself to eight hours' study a day; it is enough for the strongest; and if you sit over your books longer you will not do more, perhaps not so much; employ the rest of your time pleasantly. Go out, take exercise, make little excursions, and, above all, spend your evenings in society, that the brain may not be over harassed when you go to bed. For the rest, rise early, take a cold bath directly you get up—it makes an immense difference to the nervous system—and, if you do this, I think I can answer for you now, though you have had a narrow escape."

So Howard, with a groan, promised to comply, and his wife determined that he should do so. Every day, when the time allotted by the doctor was expired, she took the scholar into custody, and carried him out for a walk, or he found his horse was at the door, "and as it is hired by the hour, it must not be kept waiting you know, my dear," would urge the thoughtful little lady; or the dinner was ready, or the laughing mother and children came in and swarmed over his books, and ran away with

his lexicon, or bandaged his eyes for a romp at blindman's-buff. In short, Mrs. Howard was determined that her husband should not have to be waited on a second time by the local artist in hair, though he was the best-mannered tradesman, she used to say, she had ever seen, wore a white cravat, and looked like the Dean of Christchurch, only pleasanter. Perhaps, dear reader, if you and I had had such an active little nurse, we should not be plagued, as we are, with chronic gout and dyspepsia.

I am now coming rapidly to the sad part of the story. In pursuance of the physician's advice that he should see society, Howard had began gradually to ask some of his fellow students to spend the evening with him, and as his wife was a very accomplished musician they gradually formed a little company of similar tastes, and once or twice performed little concerts which had even been attended by the Principal,—the worthiest little man who ever wore cap and gown. I do believe, not only from what is about now to follow, but from the experience of my whole life, that the precipices down which we fall most fatally are almost always covered with flowers; and thus

it happened that Maurice Howard's musical parties were the source of the unhappiness which darkened the remainder of his career.

It was the last term of his residence at the University, and he was the pride and example of the whole hall. The students who knew him boasted of his acquaintance in their letters home. He was the friend of the Principal and tutors, who broke through all the rules of college etiquette to pay him visits and receive from him in turn. Since it had become known that he was ordered to go into society, he was invited to all their dinners and parties, and already high preferment had been promised him, since he could not obtain a fellowship. He was sure of a double first, for all the examiners knew him personally, and knew that modest as he was he could have posed any of them. And it was thus after three years of honourable and successful toil, and on the very termination of the labours that might have classed his name with the great men of his age, that the blow came.

Among the young men who entered at Christchurch during Maurice's last term was Lord Brandon, the son of the Earl of Winning-

ton, a nobleman who, as his son did after him, had attained almost every honour in the country without being worthy of any, and who had had, by turns, everything that ministers could give away. He was known to be poor; for, though young, he had quarrelled irreconcilably with his father; but he maintained a lavish expense, and, though a Tuft, the manner of his life was such as to draw down the grave censure of the Dean. Among all his tastes, his most inveterate was that of fiddling. Low musicians, men of talent whose disorders had reduced them to beggary or toadyism, came down from London, and were the constant companions of the young noble; while some of the most beautiful ballad airs we have were first presented to the world as compositions of Lord Brandon, whose stolen fame was certainly carried from bower to bower, and from land to land, on the wings of that Mercury who is fabled to have been the God of Thieves; for to whomsoever the music owed its origin it was not to Lord Brandon, he could not even have copied it correctly.

These airs, however, bore the undoubted stamp of genius (for how much of the finest runs wild away to ruin!) and ushered into the

world as "the hours of idleness of a young lord," the heir of an ancient title, and still at college,—they instantaneously became popular. Now it happened that the Principal's daughter, a mature young lady of thirty-six, was as inveterate a tuft-huntress and as studious a reader of the silly romances of the day as any who could be found between Woodstock and Wallingford. She was dying therefore to make the acquaintance of Lord Brandon, doubting nothing that she should captivate him at first sight if she could only accomplish an introduction. But how was it to be managed? Her father would not ask him, because he said he was a disgrace to his college ("As if," she asked, scornfully, "a lord could be a disgrace to anything"), and most of the stately old dons whose houses she frequented, so far from thinking about asking her hero to dinner, an honour often vouchsafed to a Tuft, were seriously discussing his expulsion from the University altogether. Unluckily, in her despair she thought of Mrs. Howard and her musical soirees; there might be a means of effecting her object if the young noble was really fond of music; and who could doubt it, who heard the

airs he was daily giving to the world, sung in every street, and ground on every barrel organ?

Armed, therefore, with a pile of his Lordship's (save the mark!) newest compositions, she marched down to the house of the fated scholar, resolved to open her trenches and commence the siege in form, unless the place was to be carried by a *coup de main.*

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Howard!" cried the enemy, in affected raptures; "I have brought you some such beautiful music."

"You are very kind," replied Mrs. Howard; "I am afraid all mine is sadly humdrum, and I am almost tired of it."

"Well, my dear, you won't be tired of this very soon, for it is all composed by Lord Brandon, the young nobleman who has just entered at Christchurch."

"What, a student do you mean, dear?" How tender ladies are when they do not even care two buttons about each other.

"Yes, to be sure; do you not know him, dear?"

"It is an ancient title," said Howard, who, like all Scotchmen, loved a lord.

"Oh, yes, a very ancient title, and his father is the Earl of Winnington, and I don't know what besides. What strange people you are not to ask him here of an evening."

"Why, my dear, we do not even know him," said Mrs. Howard.

"Oh, nonsense; you do not want to know a fellow student. I will tell Mr. Sap you have commissioned me to tell him to bring his Lordship here to-morrow evening, and I am sure he will be delighted."

"Well, my dear, if you really think so we shall be very glad to see him," returned Mrs. Howard, seeing, as ladies are apt to do, some unknown prospect of advantage to her husband in making the acquaintance of a lord. "But remember it is your own proposal: *I* should never have thought of it," added the prudent little lady.

"Oh, yes, leave it to me, and I will see that Mr. Sap manages it all nicely." Poor Mr. Sap! He was one of the hall tutors, and not being independent and wise enough to trust to his own exertions, and follow the certain and respectable career of those who hold fast to their alma mater, was always hankering after Tufts

and toadying for livings, often long given away two or three deep to the relations or other dependents of those before whom he was contented to degrade himself into a sycophant. But he was one of those poor sneaking fellows who always must be trying to curry favour with somebody, and he was therefore in perfect subjection and thraldom even to Miss Syntax, who had nothing to give him but her withered hand and thirty-six years in return, unless it was that he now and then got an invitation to dine with her father.

Our mature young lady's object being now therefore obtained, she took leave of her dear friend with many assurances of affection, even promising, as Mrs. Howard was fond of keeping up appearances, to supply several minor deficiencies in her little household from the Principal's plate-chest, in order that the Lord might be received with a silver tea-pot and waiters, as became his condition.

It is painful to remember how even the scholar, who, it must be remarked, knew nothing more of his guest than the music he was said to have composed, interested himself about the

arrangements for that evening, which was to be for him the darkest upon which the sun ever set. How he placed some fruit and wine himself on a side-table, laying aside his Theophrastus to do so, and engaged the services of the greengrocer, who was in the habit of officiating on similar august occasions, that the ancient blood of the Howards might not be disgraced before an equal.

His wife, too, was the busiest of the busy all day, especially with some mysterious arrangements about the children's dresses, for even their appearance on the scene formed part of the programme (who knew but what the loving lord might take a fancy to them, and befriend them through life?); and she read up the family history of the Earls of Winnington in the peerage, till her silly little head got quite confused among collateral branches and great-great-great-grandfathers, with uncles of the third peer, and cousins in the sixth remove, till in the end I will be bound she did not know whether "gules or" and "cerf passant" had not been ancestors of that distinguished race in former generations; and she startled Maurice (deep in a Greek

chorus) by asking him if "field argent" did not infer that a Winnington had been present at the famous meeting between the first Francis and bluff Harry on the cloth of gold.

It sickens me to write what follows.

CHAPTER XXI.

"——— Nel mondo
O virtù non si trova,
Oè sol virtù quel che diletta e giova."
METASTASIO.

We are in the college-rooms of a young Tuft more years ago than I should like to remember. They are spacious lofty rooms, with a roomy fireplace that may date from the reign of Elizabeth, and beside which many a noble scholar may have pored and pondered. A fine window, set in Gothic carvings of stone, looks out into the tranquil quadrangle, the very pavement of which is worn away by the steps of studious men. The room is filled with that tempered mystic light which suits the thought-

ful. In such a room Gray and Johnson, Prior, Wotton, or Temple, may have felt the first promptings of their genius, and Kirk White burnt his life's lamp out.

Here are books, too. Let us examine them. Faugh! The Racing Calendar, Boxiana, a volume of obscene songs; what do these things do here? Let us look round the room. There are various musical instruments strewed about it, with some manuscript notes, lying scattered and disorderly on a side-table. Come, that is not so bad. For, alas! a bright man may be a sloven. But what have we here?—prints of dancing-women in every variety of indecent posture. Well! "young men will be young men; custom is custom." Perhaps our young Tuft took them with the reading-desk and the easy chair from the last tenant. But that cannot be, either, for under one of the most florid we see—"To the Viscount Brandon, &c., &c., &c., this print is respectfully dedicated," &c. Fie! my Lord. Let us look into yonder portfolio; doubtless it contains some rare old engravings. No; they are French coloured prints, and of the very worst school of the Palais Royal. A collection of pipes, a quantity

of cigar-boxes, half empty, a broken champagne bottle with a soiled white kid glove twisted round the neck, a pair of muddy hunting boots, a broken whip, and a crushed hat, which my Lord's servant has not had time to clear away, tell loudly enough the history of the previous day.

In the centre of the room is a table laid for breakfast with the good cheer of college battels, and by the fire are stretched some dogs of various breeds and sizes. But here comes the Tuft. He is just out of bed, and in the most violent coloured dressing-gown ever sold at the "ruination shop." He has a top-boot on one leg, and a slipper on the other. His boot pinches him, however—Friar Tuck will even teaze a Tuft sometimes; and he enters the room uttering curses that it is horrible to hear passing those boyish lips. He has missed chapel, of course, and the first thing he hears is that the Dean wishes to see him at nine o'clock.

"Haw! haw! a good catch," grins the Tuft to his servant; "take in an Œger and keep the oak sported all day." Sporting the oak being University slang for keeping the door shut.

Our Tuft is a long gawky lad, with goose and

knave written as legibly upon every feature as the hand of nature can write it. A small narrow head, like a snipe's, with a long pointed nose that alone redeems the expression of the face from absolute idiotcy, by giving it one of low tricky cunning; small eyes, half cunning, half savage, thin straggling hair, and a sensual mouth, complete the upper portion of the picture. The body is chiefly remarkable for its extreme awkwardness, the hands always seem in search of something, and the feet, which turn out preposterously, have different opinions as to the place to which they are required to go.

Before the Tuft has half got through his breakfast, a boisterous descent from half a dozen of the wildest lads in college is made upon the room.

"Holloa, Brandon!" roars a stentorian voice; "we shall be late for the meet. I have been doing a chapel this morning to be able to send in an Œger for the rest of the week. Are you going to turn out in pink to-day?"

"Yoicks! tallyho!" answers the Tuft, "that's your time of day." For even at this period he could never speak intelligibly.

"Hoigh, you slavey," he goes on, discharging a boot-jack at his servant's head as a proof of his playful wit, "bring my—hoigh, you know what I want, d— ye."

"Here is your left boot, my Lord," says the servant, meekly, and kneeling to divest his foot of the odd slipper, for he is the son of an old retainer of the Winningtons.

"Then why did'nt you bring it before," roars my Lord, lengthening his loose wayward leg and laying his servitor prostrate, "Hay?"

"I was a going so for to do, my Lord," answers the unhappy wretch.

"Hay?" roars the tuft again, and his rough, boisterous companions are in ecstacy (lads like them are very unfeeling). "Go it, Brandon, pitch into him, pitch into him, he's got no friends;" and thus adjured the Tuft does not disdain to have a few rounds with his slavey, all the knocking down being on his own side.

Poor old Tom Bowyers! When your son went away with your young Lord that fine morning from Cleveland Park, and you and your "old Missus" were so glad about it, you little thought how my Lord would train him; till, at last, he was sent for fifteen years across

the water, and you broke your honest old heart about him.

A faint tap is heard at the door. "Come in, and be d—— to you," shouts my Lord, "if you're not a dun," and a pallid miserable looking fellow crawls in. He is a musician, a man of talent, who has taken to bad courses, and lost himself hopelessly. He supped with my Lord and his party the night before, and has now all the remorse of the next morning upon him, with the shame of having been played tricks with, and insulted, and with the greater shame of having merited it.

"Well, old kettle-drum, what do you do here?" asks one of the party: "come to make some more songs for Brandon?"

"Hoigh!" shouts the incensed Tuft, "You, you, you dog, you have not been telling you do my songs. It's a lie, it's a lie!"

But the Tuft's reproaches, and the laughter of his friends, are both cut short by another rap at the door, and enter Mr. Sap, the very personification of a toady.

Lord Brandon.—"Oigh! oh, good morning, Sap," stretches out two fingers to him, while the other students are mimicking his bowing

and grimaces behind him, for he is not a tutor of *their* college.

Mr. Sap (bowing, and showing a very white set of teeth, reaching on each side to the curls of his elaborately cultivated whiskers).—"Good morning, my Lord. I hope I have the honour of seeing you well."

Lord Brandon.—"Yes. That is, oigh,—set down, Sap."

Mr. Sap.—"Thank you, my Lord, but I am busy (sitting down nevertheless); my class comes on at ten, and I see your Lordship is going hunting."

Lord Brandon (with a sparkle of his cunning eyes).—"Yes. No objection on the part of the college authorities, is there, hay?"

Mr. Sap.—"None in the least, my Lord; a fine sport, and I always say we ought to do all we can to encourage it."

"Bravo, Sap!" shouts a young gentleman commoner, whose father is a master of hounds. "You should be our Vicar, by Jove, if it wasn't for that little ass of a brother of mine."

Mr. Sap (rising and feeling that his title for church patronage is at least beginning to be understood among the young nobility).—"Well,

my Lord, I must be going, and will leave you to your sport. By the way, is your Lordship engaged this evening? If not, I have been begged to bring your Lordship to a little musical party—at Mrs. Howard's. Her husband is the brother of Colonel Howard."

Lord Brandon.—"Oh, never mind Colonel Howard. Is the woman pretty, Sap?"

"Mr. Sap, is the woman pretty, Lord Brandon wishes to know?" shrieks a little top-booted wretch in the tutor's ear.

Mr. Sap (blushing).—"Yes, my Lord, Mrs. Howard is a—a—yes, very pretty indeed."

Lord Brandon.—"Oh, very happy, I'm sure."

Mr. Sap.—"What time shall I have the honour of coming for your Lordship?"

Lord Brandon.—"Why, say after dinner. Hay?"

Mr. Sap.—"To be sure, my Lord. After dinner—at eight o'clock."

And so, as Pepys would say, my Lord to his hunting and Mr. Sap to his books. I have neither heart or wish to trace the subsequent intimacy of the young noble with the scholar's family, and how little Mrs. Howard at first

boasted of their intimacy with him, and then suddenly became altogether silent about it, though he still went to her house, if not so often as before. It is sad to remember with what open-hearted hospitality and kindness Howard received the young student, and how gently he tried to lead him into studies and good conduct. And when he found how empty the young man's head really was, how good-naturedly he tried to find excuses for him, and defended him whenever some don passed a harsh sentence upon his conduct. Though, if he could have heard the conversation of the Tuft and his wild companions, he would have felt contempt for him indeed.

Time went on, and this unlucky intimacy continued; while Howard, constant in his chapels, and at his books, never dreamt that his wife was waylaid in her walks, and that even his servants were in the pay of the base young man, who was endeavouring to render his hearth cold, and his heart void for ever, ever more.

The day of examination drew nigh, and Howard, in defiance of his physician's injunctions, spent night and day over his books, and

his hopes rose high at the happy prospect before him. Alas! let us be careful of laying plans, and counting on happiness for the time to come, when we cannot see one day into the future. A few days before that fixed for the examination, Howard made a journey to London, to sell out a small sum he had invested in the funds, in order that he might be able to pay the fees on taking his degree, and the few bills for college expenses, which, in spite of the most rigid economy, he had gradually contracted during his residence. There was another reason also for his doing this. He had several times within the previous week felt warnings of the return of his former illness; and he was anxious to leave the University for some months immediately after his examination, for he felt that his health was about to give way a second time, and the doctor assured him that nothing but an immediate journey to Italy would give him any chance of a permanent recovery. It was arranged, therefore, that he was to start for London one day and be back the next, for, like all men of retired habits, he had an exaggerated idea of the time required to

transact any business of importance. Starting, therefore, by an early coach, he found himself towards the middle of the day with his affairs concluded, and the whole afternoon hanging idle on his hands. Even London, however, is a dull place for a man whose heart is elsewhere; and, after vainly endeavouring to hit upon some means of spending his time satisfactorily, he determined to take a simple dinner and return by the mail.

It was nearly midnight when he arrived at Oxford and found himself before his own door. The street was dark and silent, save for a post-chaise that stood waiting in the dark shadow of one of the neighbouring colleges. Was that a light which flashed out for a moment from his bed-room window? No! all was dark and silent; so, letting himself in quietly with a latch-key, he paused for a moment on the staircase, and then turned into his study.

"Dear Helen!" said he. "She is asleep, I will not disturb her;" so taking down one of his examination books he prepared to read away the night.

"What was that noise—a muffled step, and

a door softly closed; and then that light, flashing again for a moment in the passage; and then all dark."

"Helen!" called the scholar, starting up: "is that you, Helen?"

No answer. Howard rose, and flung the door wide open. "Helen!"

All was silent as before.

"Pshaw!" cried the scholar, "the whim of a sick brain. I hope I have not disturbed her. But hark! that step again."

Another moment, and Howard was in the passage, lamp in hand. The click of a pistol, and then the snapping of a cap; an oath; and the light fell upon the gaunt form of Lord Brandon. The pallor of the craven was on his cheek, and the irresolution of the evil-doer in his heart.

"Villain!" cried Howard, closing with him, "what do you do here at such an hour?"

A wild shriek from the top of the staircase told the story too well. His wife, the pride of his heart, the partner of his hearth, the one sole joy of his life, was about to fly with the unworthy noble; and she stood before him in her travelling dress, preparing to leave home

and children, the guilty wife before a husband who had never spoken to her but in tenderness.

The blood of a race of soldiers mantled in the cheek of Maurice Howard, as with one groan of despair he sprung upon the man who had dishonoured him. The struggle, however, was long and fierce, and his wife clung to him, shrieking for mercy and pardon, or there had been murder done that night.

"Woman!" cried the scholar, standing over his prostrate betrayer, "have I deserved this?" And then the sharp pain took him at the heart again, and he staggered, and fell fainting. When he recovered himself Lord Brandon was gone. But the terrible and gloomy vengeance of the outraged man pursued him. Days and days he followed his uncertain traces, and at length came up with him. There was no escape for that miserable seducer then; and, after a vain attempt to evade a duel on the part of Lord Brandon, they fought. Sickness and excitement, however, rendered Howard's aim uncertain, and his first fire took no effect upon his antagonist. The seconds now wished to stop the affair, but Howard fiercely refused.

"If Lord Brandon attempt to quit the ground," said he, "I will follow and shoot him like a dog."

"Then I have to warn you," replied Colonel Cochrane, who acted as Lord Brandon's second, "that my principal will return your fire; he has satisfied the laws of honour."

"If he does not return my fire I will walk deliberately up and kill him," returned Howard.

The colonel shuddered, and was observed to give some directions to his principal on handing him the second pistol, and at the second fire Howard fell, shot through the shoulder, and the noble fled.

He recovered to find his hearth lonely. His wife, unable to look upon him again, had fled with her betrayer, and the scholar felt that with her were gone every hope and joy he had in the world. He would no longer enter the Church, for he thought, when calmer, that much as he had been wronged, a Christian minister should have acted differently. He would not even go up to examination; for life and its objects had lost all attraction in his eyes. Henceforth he became what you have known him, dear reader,—not a moody and

unbearable man, but a recluse, endeavouring however to do his duty in that state of life to which it pleased God to call him. And this is the history of the lost life. He never spoke of his wife afterwards; and few or none knew the true story of his wrongs, though, when he learned she had been abandoned in Italy by her lover, he sought her out to offer his forgiveness and help in trouble, but in vain. They never met afterwards.

CHAPTER XXII.

Sad memory brings the light
Of other days around me,
  The smiles, the tears
  Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken ;
  The eyes that shone,
  Are dimmed and gone,
The cheerful heart now broken.

If descriptions of localities were ever worth the paper they are written on, and if, after, the most careful reader carried away the smallest idea of the place described, I should certainly try to describe the cottage where Maurice Howard had sought a retreat from the coarse pity of the world in the depth of his great sorrow.

Tread softly, reader ! we are in the scholar's library, a little room, but well stocked with

books of a rare choice. The light of a single lamp is shed upon the pale face of the recluse, as he sits reading some old letters, yellow with time. How handsome he must have been! what chiselled features and what a noble expression! Oh that wavy hair, now grey with time and grief, what a net it must have been to catch a maiden's heart! A flush, growing deeper and deeper, is on the scholar's cheek, and his eye glistens with an unwonted dew as he reads those letters. They are the last he ever received from his wife, whom he is said to have loved dearly, and who died long ago in Italy. At length he pauses and presses his hand tight to his heart as he takes out one more solitary letter. It contains a lock of golden hair, silken and glossy, and is written in a trembling hand, as if by an invalid; it bears a foreign postmark.

"Cease to seek for me, dear Maurice," says the writer, "never so dear, so wildly beloved as now, when the cold hand of death is upon me, for, before you receive this, they tell me, oh, my wronged and noble husband, I shall have ceased to be. I have no right to address you thus. I forfeited the title to call you husband

on the night I outraged the sanctity of your roof; but perhaps now, with the grave so near, you will let me write to you once more in the language of affection without thinking it polluted by the source from which it comes. Maurice, Maurice, I am dying, broken-hearted. Little have you known, while seeking me so long and generously, that I have been often in the same house with you, and that I have crept out at nights to see only your shadow pass to and fro, as you paced your chamber, and then, when you have retired to rest, I have blessed you in my heart of hearts, and prayed for you, Maurice, as in the old days, when I used to lay my girlish head on your breast, and sink gently into happy dreams. Yet I dared not speak to you; I would not have lifted my dishonoured head in your presence for worlds, oh, my husband; and I felt that we were to meet on earth, never—never more. I have loved you always —always, I may tell you so now that my last strength will be perhaps spent in tracing these words. But I will not wring your heart by opening an old wound, which I pray to God time may now have healed, and may you still be

happy—happy Maurice, with some one worthier of you than I have been."

Oh! groaned the scholar, and the great drops of agony gathered like dew upon his forehead, and he hid his head in his hands, and sobbed with a mighty grief.

"May you see a fairer wife than me, Maurice, again by your side, and laughing children gathered round your knee once more, and may the blessing of her fall upon your hearth who once brought desolation to it. Grieve for me no longer, my husband, though it is sweet to me, even in the hour of death, to know how you did grieve, and that I, once at least, did make you happy, and was fair in your eyes (you see I am vain even now), and you regretted me. I was not so guilty either as you thought me, Maurice. I did not wrong you willingly. Before Him who knows all secrets and all hearts, and in whose presence I shall soon be, I swear that I did not wrong by mine own act and free will. Our servants were bribed, Maurice, and the day that you left me I was taken suddenly ill after drinking a glass of water given me by Jane (you remember my old maid?) and—and,

spare me the rest Maurice; enough, that I woke to shame and anguish unutterable; and, unable to bear your return, I agreed to fly with my betrayer. Oh Maurice, to hear you say that you forgive me now, that you pity me, to know that I have plucked away a single thorn of the many that I planted in your heart that day, would make me happy. But you are far away, pursuing your thankless search, for her who would live a thousand years in purgatory but to touch your hand, and weep her burning tears upon your bosom but for one hour.

"And now, Maurice, comes the last prayer of one who has loved you so fondly. Will you grant it? I must have great faith in your nobleness of heart, even to ask. I have a daughter, Maurice, by him it would make my dying cheek blush crimson even to name. Will you see that she is not cast away, Maurice, and give her the little fortune that was mine, and which you wrote to me that you had placed again at my disposal in the bank untouched? I have left it there, Maurice, but she, poor girl, nameless and penniless! Oh, my dear husband, forget her birth and take her by the hand now that I am gone. Let her be your

servant, even so that she be with you, and never know who were her parents. It is a dreadful doom, Maurice, that my name and memory must be forgotten by my own child; but it is better thus.

"And now, farewell, for the last time, dear Maurice! Think of me sometimes, with your new bride and in your happy home. Think of me as I used to be, ere sin and shame had blotted out all that may have been once fair in your unhappy Helen. Think of me as I was on our wedding-day, when friends were round us, and the whole world seemed to smile. Think of me as when I was first made a mother, and forgot my own pain in seeing you so happy, and smiled so often lest you should think I was suffering. Think of me as when I clung round your neck at parting on that fatal day, and knew not that before the cock crew again I should have betrayed you. Think of me, Maurice, not as I am now, and try to blot these five dreadful years from your memory for ever."

"So young, so good, so beautiful," groaned the scholar, "and to perish thus! And the child, too, how strange that there should be no

trace of her, for I never believed that Italian innkeeper's story of her death. Oh! my wife, why did you not return to me? All could not have been with us as once it was, but we might have been friends, and you might have lived to close my eyes instead of dying so far away and among strangers. And I would have believed you had you said but one word. Worms that we are, what right have we to judge and to condemn each other? And you, too, were guiltless, guiltless in the sight of God, and now in mine. Alas! that despair should have seized you so strongly, and that despairing you were lost."

So ran the thoughts of Maurice Howard as he sat that still midnight, watching the dying embers of the fire, and heedless of the lamp that was flickering, untrimmed and unfed, its last feeble ray in the socket.

"And I shall soon be a lonely man. First, my wife left me, and now my son. And how like he is to her; the beauty of feature, the same restlessness, and the same affectionate heart. I wish I could persuade him to remain here."

So the night passed away, and the scholar

communed with his own heart, and called up the memories of his youth one by one. And from the mist of many things, and thoughts, and fancies long forgotten, the image of his lost wife still stood clearly out, every trait, every feature remembered; the songs she had sung, and the words she had spoken from the time when she first harkened to his wooing till their last farewell. The light laugh rung again upon her lips, cheerful as healthy weather, and the jest came sparkling from her lips once more. The light of his hearth and the joy of his heart was with him as in his old college days. He could hear her as she came in like some queen of the flowers, with her laughing children, now all dead but the son who was going to leave him. He could feel her warm hand laid playfully in his own, and looked into her bright loving eyes, with their arch warning, as they summoned him from his books. Oh, God! was it her pardoned spirit made happy in heaven, which was permitted, through her prayers, to sit beside the lonely scholar on that night, and speak sweet words of hope and comfort to him?

There his son found him in the morning,

not asleep, but dreaming, with his cold hand pressing still that lock of golden hair, and with a heavenly smile upon his lips, like one who might have been holding communion with angels.

He was unconscious of his son's entrance into the room, but soon recovered himself; though it was observed by those about him, that from that time he seemed to grow old suddenly; his hair changed rapidly from grey to white, and his voice took a softer tone when speaking to anybody than it had before. Those who were long with him, too, felt impressed with a sort of awe when they left him, as if Maurice Howard was no longer one of them, and that his pure spirit was finding itself the wings of the bird, and would soon "fly away, and be at rest."

Perhaps a sort of warning from the moral of his own life prevented his changing persuasion into command, in trying to alter his son's determination, and he might indeed have had a conviction that his race were better fitted for the stirring and adventurous than the more quiet occupations of life.

"I will not try to influence your inclina-

tions too strongly then, William," he said, "if you wish to go; but if you do not find things all that you desire them to be, and any thing should happen to me while you are away, I have left every thing here to you, our little all. And here, in this drawer which you see opens with a secret spring, you will find a letter containing the only instructions I have to leave. It refers to a small sum of money, sufficient for a modest living, invested in the Bank of England, and you must promise me never to touch it for twenty years, in case during that time you should be able to carry out the wishes which you will find contained in this letter. God bless you, my son!"

"Do not talk so sadly, Sir," replied William Howard. "You will live many happy years yet, I trust; live to see me a distinguished man, and worthy of your affection."

"Perhaps it may be so," returned the scholar; "we may hope, but, should it be otherwise, you will remember my instructions. I shall be able to spare you a greater allowance than the regulations of the Austrian service absolutely require, though I dare say you will not find it too much, and my wants here alone will be few,

and easily supplied. For the rest, you had better draw on Coutts for what we fix on monthly; and if you get in debt, write to me frankly and at once. Remember, there is little hope of distinction for the debtor: otherwise I would rather your letters to me did not contain allusions to money. What I have is yours; take it freely, but never degrade yourself or me into beggar or banker."

Once more we met altogether under General Howard's hospitable roof ere we separated,—the one to the East, and the other to the West. General Howard's preparations for his departure were completed, and he only awaited his last interview with the Commander in Chief and the Colonial Secretary, to sail by the first packet for his government, whither he had half persuaded his brother to accompany him. Mr. Sinclair, as the reader is aware, was also meditating a journey abroad, and, as I fancied, would probably be accompanied by his young wife in Emily Howard, who sat looking at him so affectionately, though she seemed very sad and heavy-eyed. William Howard was all fire and expectation; and though he read us some very pathetic verses, full of the pain which he

declared it gave him to speak the word "Farewell!" it was plain enough that his heart was already in Hungary, with his gay hussar jacket and prancing horse.

I was the only one who seemed to hang loose on the party, and whose going away interested no one, whom no kind hand was stretched forth to stay,—a very painful species of freedom. I sat down near Emily, as I fancied for the last time I should see her unwedded, and began to talk to her about her cousin William, but I saw that the tears came into her eyes, and she could not listen to me. I felt very sad too, myself. I was just at that age when the heart is overflowing with love; and, though at that time I certainly could not be said to have more than a brotherly affection for Emily, very little would have made it otherwise, and I wished that little had been.

"Good bye, Emily," said I, as we were preparing to separate for the night, "I shall be gone before you are up to-morrow."

"Good bye, Walter," she said, crying.

"May you be very, very happy, Emily," said I,—"may you both be happy."

"Who do you mean, Walter?" she asked.

" Mr. Sinclair," said I.

" You don't know how kind he has been to me, dear Walter," she answered, " and how he speaks of you when you are not here."

" Good bye, then, once more, Emily," said I,—" I hope you may be happy with him."

" Thank you, thank you, Walter," she sobbed, " I am sure we shall be,—I hope we shall see you."

" Do not hope that," answered I gloomily, and so we parted,

" Love, how it mocks poor Bliss,
For sad Despair !"

END OF VOL. I.

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